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DELA.

BY JOHN BRIND.

"FAITHFUL e'en till death!"—the murmuring whisper,
Breathed in Dela's ear, aroused the flushing
Of her cheek and heart's thrice rapid beating.
Words replying to the whisper loving,
Malcolm pressed with honest, manly fervour,
Her he loved, then through the glade hand-clasping,
'Mid the leafing's cool and quivering shadows,
Malcolm Grey and Dela passed, soul-linking
With the glances of betrothed lovers.

Two sweet months, and on the golden shingle,
Malcolm with his Dela newly wedded
Moves with proud and many happy paces,
Seeking with a loving husband's favour,
Safety for his lovely dark-eyed Dela,
From the pools, the rocks, and rising wavelets.
Glances many, all of admiration
Meet the dark and happy handsome couple,
As they roam amid the crowds of fashion,
Love engrossed, and therefore world unheeding.
Life was sweet, ah, nought in life was sweeter
To the young and happy wedded Malcolm,
Than that week of favoured love's devotion;
And in dark and dreary days that followed,
Memory of that time of joy and gladness
Often lighted up the soul's dull darkness,
Saving him the loss of life and reason.

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Soon, they hied them to their rural dwelling,
'Mid the Cumbrian hills and northern breezes,
To the village where the Grey's stone mansion
Had for years in stately grandeur rested :
Grounds superb in art and nature's beauty ;
Verdant meadows met the eye far looking ;
While there gleamed a silver lake, whose lilies
Studded the unruffled water's surface
With their bright and pure snow-coloured blossoms.
"You, my queen, shall mistress all this grandeur,"
Cried the bright and ever-fondling husband,
And upon her lips he pressed the kisses,
Warm with lasting love and many welcomes.

Through the country, far and wide his Dela
Far out-matched the fair surrounding beauties.
Gay and bright and smiling like the sunshine,
Ever ready with sweet rippling laughter,
Captivating ears and hearts the many,
Shedding light where all before was darkness,
Dela ever welcomed was and sought for.
Proud though Malcolm of her matchless beauty,
Better, better still, he deemed her pureness,
Fit to mate with one whose name unsullied
He inherited from generations,
Pure in soul and full of lordly actions.
Naught of pleasure spared he from his Dela ;
Swarmed the stately mansion night and morning
With the fashion, gaiety, and splendour.
Lordly men, and queenly ladies grouping
Round the happy pair with protestations
Of delight, and ever-ringing laughter,
Till the mansion from the roof to basement
Trembled with Elysian light and gladness.
So passed on one year of happy ending,
When amid December snows and moanings,
Burst the bells in wild and frantic ringing ;
Shouted voice in oft repeated greeting,

Hills re-echoed joy's reverberations
With incessant ding and distant humming.
Horses hoofs the snowy shower upcasting
As the carriages, continual coming,
Drove so gaily on the snow-clad road-way,
To increase the village acclamations
In their welcome of Grey's little heiress.
Happy husband, now the happier father,
Heartfelt joy within him swelled unceasing.
Kissed he rapturously wife and cherub,
Lingering with long and sweet caresses
On the rosey bud of his ancestral
And all stately family tree, till feelings,
Gladness linking, bound the father's heartstrings
With a double love and soul-felt prayer.

In the village dwelt a hard-work'd curate,
Lately come, whose strange and marvellous beauty
Struck beholders with a gaping wonder.
Tall and fair, oh, passing fair his ringlets,
Clustering round the well-formed head and forehead;
Eyes of sparkling blue, whose silken fringes
Vied the tinge of purest gold. Apollo
Would have envied those red lips their curving,
While the chin appeared in dimpled beauty,
Round and full; the nose in classic straightness,
Perfecting fair Nature's wond'rous carving.
While his voice with an alluring cadence,
Rose and fell with all a music's sweetness.
Popular he grew with all around him;
Rich and poor e'er held the hand of welcome;
Cast a subtle charm, his angel beauty,
On the simple, superficial rustic,
On the proud and haughty lord and lady.
Malcolm Grey bestowed a heartfelt friendship
On this man, and treated him as brother;
Ever welcomed him within his mansion,
Telling him another home to make it.

Proudly led him to the room of volumes,
Showed him works of beauty and of number;
Rare, and passing valuable volumes,
And with pride, he begged him there to study
When he felt the brain it wanted loreing.
Thus was Albert Philip Javin, curate,
Loved and welcomed by the manly Malcolm.
On the morn that welcomed Malcolm's heiress,
Albert hastened to the joyous father,
Pressed his hand in long congratulation,
Then receiving in his arms the infant,
Kissed its innocent and dimpled features,
Blessings, deep and earnest, on it pouring,
Till the father's heart with growing favour,
Shook again the hand of Albert Javin,
Calling him his dearest friend and brother.

Time passed on, and once again the beauty
Of bright Dela queened the hall and ball-room.
Bouyancy and freedom marked her manner
With increasing show, delight, and fervour.
At the hunt now wildly dashing, flying,
Through the brach, and o'er the prickly hedges;
'Mid the fashion-circles quickly flashing
Repartee that drew the flush and laughter
From the worshipping, surrounding mortals.
Yet, 'midst all the friendship from her showing,
Coldness, silence, gave she Albert ever.
Not one word from her while he was present,
Marked her pleasure or her usual gladness.
Malcolm pained, surprised, most earnest begged her
Welcome him with all a sister's feelings.
But she turned her face away in silence,
Ne'er replying him, nor e'en assigning
Reason for her strange ungenial conduct.
Paling white as snow, when he was mentioned,
Otherwise unknown was her aversion.
Albert bore this all with wistful sadness,

Bore his form with meekness and with sorrow,
 When half-angered Malcolm spoke compassion,
 Sighed to think he gave such pain to Dela;
 Would have willingly foregone his visits,
 But that Malcolm almost sternly bade him,
 As a brother, do a brother's duty;
 Dela liked him not, then Malcolm, therefore,
 Bound was to bestow a double friendship.
 So things went, while Malcolm hopèd fondly
 Time would thaw this coldness of his Dela.

(*To be Continued*).

STUDIES IN POETRY.

CHAPTER III.

Necessity of Metre—Novelties in Metre: Southey—Rejection of Metre: Walt Whitman Criticised—The Fleshly School—Varieties of Metrical feet: Iambus, Trochee, Anapæst, &c.

POETRY in form is distinguished from prose by metre, and by metre only. No doubt the essence or spirit of poetry is quite another thing, as we sought to show in the introductory chapter of the present series. But, as De Quincey acutely observes, "those who deny that metre is the characteristic distinction of poetry, deny, by implication, that prose *can* be truly opposed to poetry.* But so long as there exists *some* metre to regulate the syllables, the special kind is wholly at the option of the poet. Indeed, the selection of a fitting metre for the poet's peculiar purpose is most important, and is a strength test of his capability. Pathetic, or heroic, or jovial sentiments require some correspondence in verbal sound, and this sound is supplied in a suitable metre; formerly by the lyre accompanying the metre. The English poetry contains a vast variety of metres, on which we shall say something presently: but there is nothing in the nature of things or in the claims of poetry or the poetic art to forbid the origination of new metres. Such inventions, in truth, are among the most indubitable evidences of genius. In discussing then, what may be called

* De Quincey's Works, x., 76.

established metres, we ought at the same time to allow and to encourage the "tuneful quire" to construct, according to their several ability, new metres of their own, and thus to become, in a strict use of the word, *makers* or *poets*. In a word, a poet uses his tools—words, accents, quantity, and the externals generally of versification—precisely as any other artist, and with at least an equal freedom. And so Southey, when originating the apparently wild metre of the *Curse of Kehama*, thought well to justify his deviation from artificial rules, which his generation over-estimated by the following pertinent citation from Wither :—

For I will for no man's pleasure
Change a syllable or measure;
Pedants shall not tie my strains
To our antique poets' veins;
Being born as free as these,
*I will sing as I shall please.**

A sentiment not unworthy of a poet—and an Englishman. We may here once for all touch upon novelties in metre, since our plan will not permit elsewhere a similar *excursus*. The followers of Pope—or in fact the established school down to Cowper and the

* George Wither was born at Brentworth, near Alton, in Hampshire, July 11, 1588; died May 2, 1667, and was interred in the Savoy Church, in the Strand. In 1613 he was committed to prison for his satires entitled "*Abuses Stript and Whipt*." When the Civil War broke out in 1642, he sold his estate to raise a troop of horse for the Parliament; and soon after he rose to the rank of major; but being taken prisoner by the Royalists, "Sir John Denham, the poet," says Wood, "some of whose estates at Egham, in Surrey, Wither had got into his clutches, desired his Majesty *not to hang him, because so long as Wither lived, Denham would not be accounted the worst poet in England!*" He could never refrain from his Puritanic satires, according to the same authority, and on the Restoration, for a libel entitled, "*Vox vulgi*," he was committed to Newgate, and afterwards as a close prisoner to the Tower. The facility of Wither's pen was remarkable and not always agreeable: he "*sung as he pleased*" in every way. Such a superfluity of easy but flat and insipid narrative, and trite prosaic remarks, scarce any writer has been guilty of (Chalmers did not live to read Walter Whitman). But when the examples of real poetry, which he has given, are selected from his multitudinous rhymes, they are in point both of quality and quantity sufficient to stamp his fame. His works or portions of them have been edited by Dalrymple, Sir Egerton Brydges, and in 1856 by Farr. Chalmers's *Biographical Dictionary*, vol. 32, p. 222. Wither is well remembered by "*Shall I wasting in despair, die because a woman's fair?—a pleasant yet ungallant and snobbish production.*"

innovators at the beginning of the present century, who were stirred in part by the publication of Bishop Percy's *Reliques*, and in part and more especially by the Lakists—were tenacious of a mechanic uniformity and an artificial correctness. Poetry fell into a mere mechanic jingle ; ultimately men arose to break the fetters, and in our day the artistic danger menaces not from the quarter of undue "correctness," but rather from that, as will appear presently, of ridiculous and riotous license. In this, as in far higher things of morals, politics, and religion, many of our "advanced" contemporaries despise authority, condemn history, and consider our ancestors in mass as unilluminated individuals. This is very silly ; and here, if anywhere, we may safely repeat, Time will show. Such extremely "positive" teaching will be proved as foolishness. However, in the revival of poetry, occurring on the fall of the slaves of Pope and the burst up of the poetic infallibility, each poet began, as it were, to sing for himself, to tune his own lyre. Both Burns and Coleridge invented metres ; the latter notably in *Christabel*, which metre was picked up, appropriated, polished, and perpetuated by Lord Byron in his fine poem, *The Siege of Corinth*. Lord Byron, again, following Frere, introduced or rather popularised the burlesque Italian style in his *Don Juan*. Perhaps, as a specimen of an entire novelty in metre, which once startled the critics out of their propriety, but is thought comparatively conservative now, we may take a passage from Southey :—

So spake the stubborn race,
 The unbelieving ones.
 I too, of stubborn unbelieving heart,
 Heard him and heeded not.
 It chanced, my father went the way of man,
 And perished in his sins.
 The funeral rites were duly paid,
 We bound a Camel to his grave,
 And left it there to die,
 So, if the resurrection came,
 Together they might rise,
 I passed my father's grave,
 I heard the camel moan,
 She was his favourite beast,
 One who had carried me in infancy,
 The first that by myself I learned to mount.
 Her limbs were lean with famine, and her eyes
 Ghastly and sunk and dim.
 She knew me as I pass'd,

She stared me in the face ;
 My heart was touched—had it been human else ?
 I thought that none was near, and cut her bonds,
 And drove her forth to liberty and life.
 The Prophet Houd had seen ;
 He lifted up his voice,
 “Blessed art thou, young man,
 Blessed art thou, O Aswad, for the deed !
 In the Day of Visitation,
 In the fearful hour of Judgment,
 God will remember thee.”—*Thalaba*, Bk. I, 27.

An ear fully trained in the music of words can nicely calculate and agreeably appreciate the recurring cadences of the weird and fascinating “rhythmical romance.”

Certainly it need hardly be added that the poetic pendulum has swung round not only to novelty in metre—that may be in itself charming—but to (Shades of Shakespeare and Milton and Scott and Byron!) the total disuse of metre in verbal stuff (stuff often in the vilest import of the word) impudently affecting to be poetry. From Homer to Byron and from Byron to Tennyson, it had been implicitly accepted as a cardinal axiom, that without metre no poetry ; or, as De Quincey states it, that metre constitutes the distinction between poetry and prose. Otherwise no valid and tangible distinction can be stated ; and, by virtue of entire passages and entire pages, De Quincey himself, and Jeremy Taylor, and Burke, and Carlyle, and James Martineau, and Ruskin, and a host beside, must be classed as poets as accurately and as strictly as Byron or Wordsworth, Tennyson or Scott. No elevated prose is identical with poetry. To say otherwise is, in American slang, a fraud and nothing else. From a literary standpoint, if words have any force whatever, he who would palm off his indifferent or even superior prose as Poetry is as bad as the fellow who would practise a commercial deception.

From America, the land of novelties, the latest revolution, if we may dignify it as such, seems to have set in. Readers of the *Poets' Magazine*, men with music in your souls, or men with a scintilla of sense or sensibility ponder well. N.B.—THIS is POETRY ! !

Walt Whitman am I, a Kosmos of mighty Manhattan the son,
 Turbulent, fleshly and sensual, eating, drinking, and breeding ;

No sentimentalist—no stander above men and women, or apart from them ;
 No more modest than immodest.

* * * * *

I think I could turn and live with animals, they are so placid and self-
 contain'd ;
 I stand and look at them long and long.

It is this *Leaves of Grass* (page 54, Washington, 1872), which some of our leading critics of the "advanced" school, including such eminent men as Mr. Swinburne and Professor Dowden of Dublin, and of course the minor satellites, are never tired of lauding to the skies. *Whitman, it seems, is a born poet!!* The old Ionian bard has appeared again in the mighty Manhattan, speaking, too, the Manhattan dialect—often as strange to an Englishman as to a Greek. Much of the preceding poem is simply *not to be quoted* in an English magazine for its swinish indecency and extremely disgusting language. However, it merits, to be read as a Poet's Confession of Faith in the Nineteenth Century! Anyone who will verify my reference and read the thing through will probably agree that those dumb creatures, placid and self-contained, with whom W. Whitman would fain live, would probably reject his far more brutish muse with healthy loathing and sickening contempt. But *this*, it will be said, affects the sentiment, not the versification. Grant that there may be the use of capital letters and a faint literal exhibition of separation of lines, what is to be said of the *form* of the following passages :—

Speech is the twin of my vision—it is unequal to measure itself ;
 It provokes me forever ;
 It says sarcastically, Walt, you contain enough—why don't you let it
 out then ?
 Come now, I will not be tantalized—you conceive too much of articu-
 lation.—Page 57.

Any penny-a-liner can frame immortal "poems" equal to the following, which occurs in the *Passage to India* (Washington, 1872), page 55. It is on a funeral :—

The coffin is passed out, lower'd and settled, the whip is laid on the
 coffin, the earth is swiftly shovel'd in,
 The mound above is flatted out with spades—silence,
 He is decently put away,—is there anything more?

He was a good fellow, free-mouth'd, quick-tempered, not bad-looking able to take his own part, witty, sensitive to a slight, ready with life or death for a friend . . . gambled, ate hearty, drank hearty, had known what it was to be flush, grew low-spirited towards the last, sicken'd, was help'd by a contribution, died, aged forty-one years—and that was his funeral.

Is it not high time that this thrower about of reckless words should fulfil an intention, the only good thing in the book : *My songs cease—I abandon them* (p. 383). Whitman's poetry is usually prose in form, as in the passage about the Funeral, and is therefore to be accounted an imposition. It abounds not in elevated prose but in low slang, prosaic enumeration of details, or even lists like an auctioneer's. Its sentiment in so far (for it is replete with chaos and contradiction) as it possesses any, rejects the highest impulses of virtuous men in all ages, and drops down into a worship of mere animal appetites ; not licentiousness losing its grossness in polished verse, or rendered tolerable by an infusion of sentimental or spiritualised passion, but the mere butcher's view of impulses wholly bestial, and sordid, and unutterably low, sheer animalism : and it is just this deplorable side of humanity, a possession in common with the beasts that perish (but relieved in their case by brute virtues), that the Transatlantic Bard would fall before and worship. We have heard a deal, often somewhat harshly, of our English "fleshly school : " but here is Carnality become delirious in its ultimate degradation. Since Whitman has no poetry in form, and certainly none whatever in sentiment, we cannot consider him in any respect a poet.

A word, however, may be adventured on the Fleshly School. The supposed founder of that school, which, however, is older than Anacreon, is a man of polished intellect, vast reading, sweetest melody of music, supreme and undoubted genius. It can hardly be disputed that he has given us some of the finest, I will not say of contemporary versification, but of versification as including the whole compass of the language. *Dolores*, for example, is floating music, which steals into the soul, thrilling its inmost recesses, as you feel only the exquisite music of the words. As versification it is delicious : no other word, perhaps, so well expresses its virtue. How comes it, then, that gentlemen of this school, classical scholars many of them, affect to applaud Walt

Whitman? I should ask the gifted bard, the nominal head, or the felicitous sonneteer, Mr. Rosetti, what, honestly, would be the unanimous *consensus* of the classic poets as to Walt Whitman. Only one answer could be given. Nor can any man with ears admire the harsh raucous perpetrations of grunting grovelling words that do even pretend to sweetness of sound. Is it, that the Trans-atlantic writer has *out-fleshed the fleshly*? I do not admire or approve the designation as applied at random to its supposed English representatives. If they are fleshly they are something besides, even in the domain of idea and sentiment, and their chiefs are true poets. Still, there may be some community of idea, though in Whitman's case it is immeasurably lowered, and I can hardly like to think it. Yet Whitman's verses or poems, or rhapsodies or explosions—whatever they may be—do this much of good: they exhibit, in plain language, to what strange lengths this deification of the Creaturely, and especially of the human body, must ultimately advance. To what lengths it *did* advance, till a new and nobler light was shed upon mankind, let the pages of Lucian and Suetonius, or the writings of Petronius bear impartial testimony. As for the body with its animalism, it is enough to say that the virtuous men of antiquity, Plato and Seneca no less than Paul, would have condemned wholesale gratification of the appetites, and would have rejected with scorn and indignation so meretricious a worship. Their native light certainly taught them better things.

Enough then of Whitman,* too much some will say: but to

* The *Leaves of Grass* . . . are neither in rhyme nor in any measure known as blank verse; and they are emitted in spurts or gushes of unequal length, which can only by courtesy be called lines. Neither in form nor in substance are they poetry; they are *inflated words, foolish prose*; and it is only because he and his eulogists call them poems, and because I do not care to dispute about words, that I give them the name. Whitman's admirers maintain that their originality is their superlative merit. I undertake to show that it is a mere knack, a trick of singularity, *which sound critics* ought to expose and denounce, not to commend. . . . The secret of Whitman's surprising newness . . . can be indicated by the single word extravagance. . . . In all cases he virtually or consciously puts the question—What is there so paradoxical, so hyperbolic, so nonsensical, so indecent, so insane, that no man ever said it before, that no other man would

expose these hollow pretenders becomes a duty—and it has been discharged. The man believes neither in morality nor in metre. His formal style can never attain popularity in this country; but it has been imitated, too, as in the *Infelicia* by the late Miss Menken—much the finer book of the two, by the way; and for our present purposes it serves as an illustration of the strange pretence of unrhythmical poetry. This, it must be repeated, is a contradiction in terms.

To pass, however, to metrical verse. According to the rules of metre, (or to any rule of metre which a man may make for himself, if only it be a rule, and be duly adhered to), each line consists of a certain number of syllables: and we occasionally estimate verse by the notation of syllables, as when we speak of Octosyllabics for example. But beyond this, it is usual to denote the several component feet, and to distinguish one sort of foot, one sort of verbal combination, from another by name—iambic, trochaic, anapest, and the like. No doubt a man might compose excellent verses without the nomenclature; but it is conveniently adopted just as a workman names his tools. The names which originally were applied to measurement by quantity, which in fact is their exact and most legitimate use, are in English versification transferred to measurement by accent. All feet used in poetry consist either of two, or of three syllables, and are generally reducible to eight kinds; to wit, four of two syllables, and four of three, as follows:—

A *Trochee* has the first syllable accented, and the last unaccented; as hateful, sluggish, pretty.

An *Iambus* has the first syllable unaccented, and the last accented; as destroy, desist, betray.

A *Spondee* has both the words or syllables accented, as pale moon, dark vale, &c.

say it now, and that therefore it may be reckoned on to create a sensation? . . . Whitman, according to his admirer, Professor Dowden, of Trinity College, "in a few passages falls below humanity, falls even below the modesty of brutes." A damaging admission from a candid friend.—*Contemporary Review*, Dec. 1875, page 49, the capital criticism, "Walt Whitman's Poems." By Peter Bayne. It is odd that any "School" of Englishmen will acknowledge such an associate as Whitman.

A *Pyrrhic* has both the words or syllables unaccented ; as, *On the—tall tree*.

A *Dactyl* has the first syllable accented, and the two latter unaccented ; as, labourer, possible.

An *Amphibrach* has the first and last syllable unaccented, and the middle one accented ; as, delightful, domestic.

An *Anapæst* has the first two syllables unaccented, and the last accented ; as contravene, acquiesce.

A *Tribrach* has all its syllables unaccented ; as, numerable, conquerable.

Of these the iambus, trochee, dactyl and anapæst have been denominated principal feet, as poems may be in whole or in part formed of any of them. The others may be termed secondary feet, since their chief use is to diversify the numbers, and to improve the verse. But the character of suitable feet in a composition, the melody of verse, the whole secret of rhyme, though it can be largely displayed in rules and illustrated by examples, belongs to the great teacher—the fastidious ear of the true poet, delicate in its valuation of syllable and sound, conscious of the least jarring effect, and keenly sensitive to an inner harmony. Boys at school, and now in our large schools of Eton, Harrow, and Winchester spent painful hours over those difficult trifles (*nugae difficiles*, the late John Stuart Mill once called them before the Students of St. Andrews University, whom he was addressing as their Lord Rector), the manufacture of Greek and Latin verses—work done wholly mechanically and by precept. In like manner, an eminent English mathematician laboured to show how English verses might be made by mathematical formulæ ; as undoubtedly they might be, only what would in either case be the result? The form of verse, no doubt, but only as a rare exception and by the blindest chance (but in one direction there was the well-thumbed *Gradus* with its epithets done to order!), the slightest suspicion of poetry. Rules and analysis, and comparison and criticism will not bestow upon us the spirit or the art divine ; but they will serve to teach, to polish, to correct, and to improve ; and they are in any circumstances of eminent service.

It will now remain to consider the combination of these feet into verses or lines. We may pause to explain. Popularly a

verse is used to denote a certain set of lines, almost what we would also term a stanza. It is in this sense that we speak of the verse of a hymn, or equally of a verse in the Bible. Strictly and in its classic sense a line is also a verse. The twentieth verse of the *Æneid* is simply the twentieth line; a small matter, but one to the uninformed worth making a note of, according to the capital plan usually practised by the late lamented Captain Cuttle. We have iambic verse, anapæstic, trochaic, &c.; and not only these, severally, in their purity, but also interspersed and diversified with other feet, according to the taste and judgment of the poet. And thus we are brought to consider the prevalent kinds of measure; popularly connected as Spenserian, Heroic, Octosyllabic, Alexandrine, and so forth, or occasionally localised by the name of some poet. We have also to notice the principal kinds of poetry, epic, pastoral, didactic, &c., and above all the affinity between the order of poetry and the specific kind of measure. But these we will take in due and convenient order.*

T. H. GIBSON.

(To be Continued).

SONG.

FROM THE GERMAN.

WHEN I kissed thee, oh! maiden at night,
And thought that our love was unknown,
The stars in the heavens shone bright,
And in them we confided alone.

But into the sea a bright star
Fell, faithless; and told of our love!
The sea told the rudder—and ah!
The rudder, the boatman above.

Then a fisherman caught up the strain,
And sang to *his* loved one the song;
Even children repeat it again,
As in chorus they waft it along.

ROSA EMMA COLLINS.

* Dr. Latham in his excellent work on the English language remarks that "as names for the English measures he has nothing to offer, except the remark that the classical names are never used with impunity," and he thinks "their use engenders confusion." His notation of measures by symbols, as *A* and *X*, is certainly scientific, but the older nomenclature is easier of ordinary application; and the reader has been distinctly warned against confusing quantity, or the names of measures of quantity, with accent. It is a convenience, nothing more.—Latham, *Eng. Language*, p. 669.

A FOW(U)L NATION.

YES! It was once a Turkey, strutting proud,
With screaming war-cry, fierce, discordant loud,
Hated, distrusted, feared by all the nations,
With "Crescent" power spreading "Desolations;"
But checked and baffled in its conquering rage
The *thing* became a Vulture in a cage
And chafed and maddened sore, by being pent,
Its fiercest, filthiest passions found their vent;
Long time it battered thus on weakling prey,
On helpless wretched creatures 'neath its sway,
Until a cry of agony arose
That roused e'en Europe from its dull repose;
And—Europe—with most righteous indignation,
Talked big—conferred—withdrew—asks "Moderation!"
Asks "Moderation!!!" from a bird of prey!
Which now again transformed—in this, our day—
Flies forth to gloat once more o'er ghastly revels,
Like a vast Carrion-Crow possessed by devils:—
How long, oh! Lord! shall this foul thing have place,
This curse of Christendom, this world's disgrace?
Oh England had it chanced in this bad hour
That a true son of thine had been in power—
Instead of sleepy, senile, cynic Ben—
There would have been a MAN to lead thy men:
But this old lady in a smart new gown,
Whose head seems somewhat lost beneath its crown,
This riddling Sphinx, half Gipsy and half Jew,
How could it know what Englishmen should do?

Strange and disastrous was the freak of fate
That placed in such hands *now* the helm of state;
Hands that could juggle with an Indian crown,
But with no strength to strike oppression down,
And heart so callous that the tongue could jeer
At bitter miseries with bitter sneer.

What splendid policy! what brilliant work!
 To irritate alike both Russ and Turk;
 To join the Czar and then refuse to back him,
 To threat the Sultan without pluck to whack him;
 To use "Turk"-Elliot as a willing tool
 Wherewith to make wise Salisbury a fool,—
 To let the Moslems vent their scoffs and curses,
 And leave the Christians to their *tender* mercies!
 How skillfully the Sphinx has played this game
 To bring our England to disgrace and shame!
 Speak, England! 'ere too late, retrieve this blunder,
 Speak to this Carrion-Crow in voice of thunder!
 Forbid its outrages—its murders check,
 And, if it dares to scorn thee—wring its neck!

W. A. G.

TO A SEA GULL.

BIRD of the untiring wing, thy flight pursue,
 Roaming at will above thy fields of blue;
 How glorious thy existence! thee nor care
 Nor forethought agitates, but unaware
 E'en where to-morrow's sun thy wing shall gild,
 Thou rangest, nature's freest, happiest child.
 Thee storms appal not; on the tempest's breast
 Thy white form gleams, an emblem of unrest.
 What though the fierce gust takes thy battling wing,
 Thou wheellest onwards an undaunted thing;
 Or mid the driven spray, where surges frown,
 Dimmed in thy purity thou lightest down;
 And in green vallies lost awhile to sight,
 Again emergest to renew thy flight.
 Wild is thy home—for thee no welcome bough
 Spreads nightly shelter, but the furrowed brow
 Of some storm beaten precipice receives
 Thy form at night-fall 'neath inclement eaves,
 Whilst thou art lulled by crag-rent waves alone,
 Raising aloft their mournful monotone.

W. BROUGHAM.

SHADOWS OF LIFE.

SHADOWS floating in the air,
Haunt us ever, sometimes seen
Sailing by us still and fair,
Oftener with reproachful mien.

On they sweep a long array,
In two separate bands they go,
As the ending of the day
Brings its softened thoughts of woe.

First come phantoms of the past,
With a mournful look they gaze,
As they show us, dim and vast,
Pictures of the by-gone days.

As the second band goes by
They inflict a grief more keen,
Showing us, with mournful cry,
Visions of the might have been.

Is there any who so wise,
And so good has made his life,
That he has not heard the cries
With which all the air is rife?

Has not viewed the shadowy forms
Of the deeds he might have done;
As his life grew dark with storms
Seen the peace he might have won?

Do these shadows come in vain,
But to drive us to despair?
Can we not some wisdom gain
From the message that they bear?

Hark! they speak! the past they say,
With its errors, keep in sight,
Not for mourning the to-day,
But to guide thy future right.

B. G. AMBLER.

10

ESSAYS ON SHELLEY'S WORKS.

QUEEN MAB.

IT is a remarkable fact that the early works of most poets of very great genius are, with few exceptions, entirely unworthy of their subsequent reputations. The reason of this is probably that the imagination is more difficult to master in proportion as it is more powerful, that great and original thoughts are less capable of graceful expression than the platitudes of mediocrity, and that it is only after years of unceasing practice that the writer attains that skill in the use of metre and language which enables him to communicate his ideas with the perfect ease which so much enhances the pleasure of the reader in their reception. The short poems of Shelley's early period could scarcely have revealed to any but to readers of the deepest discernment that their author was destined to be one of the greatest lyrical poets the world has seen, and in the same way, though none but a genius of the highest order could have written *Queen Mab*, it does not require any great critical discernment to perceive that it is full of very grave faults, and that its construction is clumsy in the extreme.

If we compare the dedication to the unfortunate Harriet Westbrook with the exquisite stanzas with which Shelley lays his "summer's task" at the feet of that friend,

Whose presence on his wintry heart
Fell like bright spring upon some herbless plain,

we cannot fail to perceive how vast had been the advance made in the years which intervened between the composition of his first long poem and that of the *Revolt of Islam*, though the latter too is still very far from being a masterpiece.

But while *Queen Mab* is faulty as a whole, it contains many ideas well worthy of its author, and whose beauty Shelley himself so fully perceived, that he expended upon their expression that care and elaboration which he had not patience to give to the poem as a whole. Even the *Sensitive Plant* itself contains no simile more faultlessly beautiful than that which, in the description of *Ianthe* asleep, compares her "azure veins" to—

Streams which steal along a field of snow.

And again where he says:—

Her golden tresses shade
The bosom's stainless pride,
Curling like tendrils of a parasite
Around a marble column.

But on the other hand it is full of passages which the most ardent admirer of Shelley must confess to be the purest bombast, and of words at which the fastidious taste of its author's maturity would have shuddered. For instance, when speaking of the "Queen of Spells," he says:—

But the fair star
That gems the glittering coronet of morn,
Sheds not a light so mild, so powerful
As that which, bursting from the fairy's form,
Spread a *purpureal* halo round the scene.

And again when contrasting the destinies of the soul and body, he says that the former—

Pants for its *sempiternal* heritage.

At the time of the composition of *Queen Mab*, Shelley had not sufficient experience, nor a sufficiently cultivated taste to perceive that in a poem of the kind rhyme is an ornament absolutely required both to perfect the music of the rhythm and to fix the lines in the memory, and undoubtedly it is the absence of rhyme quite as much as its imperfect construction, and the crudeness of the opinions it expresses, which renders *Queen Mab* a composition rather to be read on account of its author's illustrious name than for its own intrinsic merits, and to be the study of the book-worm who labours to learn, and of the plagiarist who reads to rob, rather than of those who seek in poetry the beauty which enchants to forget the world, or the philosophy which teaches to rise superior to its cares.

Shelley was the first poet—and I am not aware that this point has been noticed before—who fully perceived the vastness of the field opened by the modern discoveries of science. The poetical world "was weary of its past;" men were tired of hearing how Aurora rises from the saffron couch of Tithonus, how Phoebus drives his chariot through the sky, and how Diana rules the night. The Greek mythology, beautiful as ever when studied

under the old masters, had become insupportably tedious in the hands of their imitators, and Shelley arose to be the founder of a new school. The following lines could not have been written at an earlier period of the world's history, and how much more beautiful they are than pages of versified lore, or than interminable dialogues between shepherds with Arcadian names:—

Earth appeared a vast and shadowy sphere,
The sun's unclouded orb
Rolled through the black concave.
The rays of rapid light
Parted around the chariot's swifter course
And fell like ocean's feathery spray
Before a vessel's prow.

The notes also to *Queen Mab* are full of the wondering rapture of a great and imaginative mind which, having seized a part, impatiently rushed on to conceive the whole. The simplicity with which Shelley pauses to explain facts almost universally known sufficiently shows how new their knowledge was to himself.

With respect to the line—

Whilst round the chariot's way
Innumerable systems rolled,

he dilates on the inconceivable distance of the fixed stars, informs us that the milky way is composed of clusters of suns each attended by a system like that of which our earth forms a part, and finally refers us to "Nicholson's Encyclopædia" for the confirmation of his statements.

With respect to the atheistical or rather unitarian opinions which are so fearlessly expressed in *Queen Mab*, it is sufficient to say that, when it was published without his consent, Shelley applied for an injunction from Chancery to restrain the sale, and exonerated himself from all share in having "divulged opinions hostile to existing sanctions." There is no reason to believe that Shelley's views on the subject of Christianity were at the time of his death different from those expounded in the pamphlet which provoked his expulsion from Oxford, but long before that melancholy event he had learned that venerable establishments could not be uprooted, nor powerful organisations destroyed without terrible danger to mankind.

It is scarcely possible to record a more notable example of the in-

consistency of professing Christians than the tale of the persecutions which Shelley endured for his devotion to what he believed to be the cause of truth. There is scarcely anything in the annals of pedantry more ridiculous than the spectacle of the learned theologians of one of the greatest universities in the world shrinking from a controversy with a boy of seventeen, and punishing by banishment from the institution they governed one who had the candour to recite arguments which their lives had been spent in learning to refute. Surely the former should have remembered that the blood of the martyrs had been the seed of the church, that light is only terrible to those whose deeds are darkness, and that to persecute a man for his opinions is to confess adherence to the principles on which the Inquisition was founded ; surely the latter should have felt that their duty was to explain and to teach rather than to foster error by seeming to shrink from discussion, and to confirm obstinacy by attempting to coerce.

ROBERT BLAKE.

SONNET.

TO MY WIFE.

My love, in years ago, ere thou and I were wed,
 I thought thee fair, but not so fair as wise,
 Yet more than all did thy true lover prize
 The wealth of love that in thine eye he read ;
 And now that years of intermingled life have sped,
 And clouds and storms have swept across our skies,
 Bright hopes have fled, as oft a day-dream dies,
 And onward still on life's hard path we tread,—
 Fairer I think thee now than ere before ;
 Wiser, with life's deep lessons on thy brow ;
 Thy love not less, yet purer and more just ;
 But underneath all these I, more and more,
 Find, each toward each, a deeper feeling. Now,
 Tried thro' these years, we both can say "I trust."

G. R. BOWMAN.

SONNETS ON THE POETS.

I.—ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

A PEERLESS poësy—as pure a mind
 As e'er informed a mortal minstrel's breast,
 By genius, taste, and lettered lore refined,
 Large glowing thoughts in gorgeous language drest,
 These were thy praises: what remains behind?
 A sense that woman's weakness is her power,
 A heart to pity and to love inclined,
 A smile, a tear, sweet woman's sweetest dower,
 The brain-lit fancy, and the art divine:
 O, who can read, and doubt that these were thine?
 Sweet was the music of her voice on earth:
 Deem not its tone hath died with the departed:
 Ah no! it hastens to a better birth:
 Be hope in sorrow his—the solitary-hearted!

ANSWER TO "A SONG FOR A SINGER."

(See "*Poets' Magazine*," FOR JANUARY.)

WE tender thee thanks, O singer,
 For thy beautiful tender strain!
 Wak'ning many an answering echo,
 Falling sweetly as summer rain.
 We will list to thy words of comfort,
 And though the "wild winds" rage high,
 We will look for the silver lining
 Of the clouds that enshroud the sky.
 We tender thee thanks, O singer!
 We'll "look upward" and not "retreat,"
 "Faint not, nor think of falling,"
 Though we travel with toil-bruised feet.
 Amply and richly rewarded
 If our efforts at last be blessed,
 And we hear the voice of the Saviour
 Bidding each singer "take rest."

FAITH CHILTERN.

MISSING VESSELS.

COULD I think that my silence would lighten
 An Editor's toil for the *Press*,
 Not a thought should be whispered from Brighton
 Of a lately forgotten address;
 Weeks since—when the sea too was raging,
 “Weighed” two *packets* from this stormy shore,
 Some heavy disaster presaging.
 Of their fate I have heard nothing more!
 Their fate—oh, I dare not to ask it,
 Both have perished together! who knows?
 Gone down in a waste paper basket!
 Might I vision but that sweet repose!
 Rent asunder 'mid manuscript billows—
 Shreds of poems politely unblest—
 They have drifted away—in strange pillows,
 To find their inglorious rest!
 One was duly *insured*—may I name it?
 For return—was my stamp then in vain?
 Should an Editor chance to reclaim it,
 May I see the dear fragments again?
 Pray of freedom forgive e'en the token,
 An offence gentle nature avoids,
 Should *packets* perchance have been “spoken,”
 I'm quite safe to hear it from LLOYDS'.

F. PHILLOTT.

THE HERO'S GRAVE.

HERE upon this lofty summit; where alone the eagle soars,
 Rests within his grave the hero, while beneath the ocean roars,
 In the early dawn of morning, smiles the sunbeam on his tomb.
 And at eve his soft rays linger, loathe to leave it in the gloom.
 He was brave, this lonely cheftain; never knew his heart to fear,
 In the van of battle ever did his voice the loudest cheer.
 He was loved of iron soldiers, counted bravest of the brave;
 When he fell they deemed it fittest that this height should be his grave.
 Far above the trifling troubles that engage a coward world,
 Here he sleepeth, and a banner o'er his tombstone waves unfurled.
 Calm in life, in death not calmer, e'en the winds respect his corse,
 As they pass it in a whisper, checking all their stormy force;
 Thus alone the warrior lieth, like a valiant son of Mars,
 And at night like angels watching shine the silver-gleaming stars.

J. A. COUPLAND.

ANGELUS MUNDI.

PART I.

ARGUMENT.

External Nature, in the form of a beautiful angel, comes before the writer's spirit. He tries to describe the beauty, as he hears it, and as he sees it, As he hears it in the song of the lark ; as he hears it in memory, in the song of the nightingale. As he sees it in the flowers, in moorland, hill and river ; as he has seen it by the sea. He calls on migratory birds and sea-faring men to reveal to him the wonders of the central deep. He thinks that the sea-thoughts of the ancients and his own sea angel may have risen from a common source.

BEAUTIFUL! O beautiful!
 Beautiful with all the flowers ;
 Winter's snowdrop, summer's rose,
 And the aster, autumn's star,
 And the spring-time violet ;
 Fair and fragrant flower-lives,
 By the changes of the sun
 Parted—yet in garland meeting ;
 Beautiful! O beautiful!

Beautiful with hill and stream ;
 Hill, a moorland mother lone,
 Waiting 'mid the storms her hour ;
 Stream, her sunny, laughing child,
 Downward, from the winds and mist,
 Ever downward frolicking ;
 Through the furze-lit, rocky valley,
 Through the long, deep wayside hollow,
 Past the many villages :
 In the fields a merry playmate,
 At the mill a fellow-toiler,
 At the meeting of the waters,
 Changing like a bride her name.

Beautiful with dawn and dark ;
 Dawn, the cheerful, kindly friend,
 Rousing all things to their work
 In this mighty house, the world ;
 Dark who, when their work is done,
 O'er them watches in her stars.
 Dawn, at whose first beam the lark
 Springs to the far deeps of grey,
 Singing, as he soars and soars,
 " Beautiful! O beautiful!"

Dreaming not that far adown,
 Near a tiny cornfield nest,
 Men cry out of song and sun,
 " Beautiful! O beautiful!"

Then to their day's toil pass on,
 Sorrowing that men not yet
 Sunward with their songs may soar.

Say, with songs of dawn alone,
Angel! art thou beautiful?
O, in restful leisure hours,
Thy sweet presence comes to me,
As to some poor singing bird,
Singing but the simplest part
In the music of the wood.
For bleak hill and sunny stream
Dancing down its rocky bed,
And 'neath changing sun all flowers,
And in changing woods all songs,
In sweet order these are here.
Thee in these I list and view,
And I sing my song's refrain,
"Beautiful! O beautiful!"
But when darkness casts her shroud
O'er thy sunny loveliness,
And thou lookest down in stars,
Where is then thy sweetest voice?
Ah! these silent western shades!
Who would list thy nocturns sweet,
Or to Malvern's orchard-meads,
Or to Surrey's cedared lawns,
Or to Wight's sea-belted bowers,
He must fly in phantasy;
These drear January dawns,
The pale snowdrop their one flower,
Their one voice the robin's song,
Phantasy to glorious eves
Redolent with summer turns,
When sleep seems a wrong to night,
When night seems serener day.
Need I now ask where thy voice,
Angel of the outer world?
O! the leafy heart of night
Throbs with song of nightingale,
O! thou watchest in the stars
Nightly—dost thou hear the songs
Sung beyond the sapphire dome,
Sung within the blinding veil,
Cast by sun and stars 'twixt men
And the *near* Invisible?
For it was not in our isle,
Nor in those far summer-lands,
Whither, over the blue sea,
Our brief summer flown, she flies,
Nor at any window-sill,
Where the 'wandering harper' wind,
Comes and harps to men and flowers,
She was taught that melody.
Now awhile she lists and lists,
Now again she sings and sings
"Beautiful! O beautiful!"

Dreaming not among the shades
How the poets of all years
Set their truest sweetest songs
To her music—singing still
“Beautiful! O beautiful!”

Beautiful thou art with these,
These fair inland scenes and songs;
O! and with the mighty sea,
Angel! thou art beautiful.
Far adown the southern cliffs,
England's outer battlements,
I have seen it surge and surge;
I have heard it chime and chime
Softly, half a summer's night,
On the peaceful Hastings beach;
I have watched it break and break
At the threshold of men's homes,
In our islands far south-west,
Where the other shore is Spain—
Who has watched its central moods?
Who has seen this inland sun
Rise and set o'er shoreless sea?
Who will lend an inland harp
Ocean-music masterful?
O fleet migratory plumes,
Halfway 'twixt the summers flying,
Swallow, say; say nightingale,
What strange ocean-birds ye meet,
Halfway 'twixt the azures poisoning?
What strange harmonies ye hear,
O'er your own mute music surging?
Ah! ye stay not at my call;
Ah! ye think of leaf and sward,
And the summer of the south.
O far-wandering mariners—
Not to you this water-world,
With its myriad moving life,
A mere path 'twixt shades and shades—
Ye have looked on coral isles,
And on drifting Arctic ice;
Ye have seen the diver-bird
Sailing o'er the glassiness,
And the petrel in the wake
Of the good ship hover scared,
Thinking of the blinding rain,
And the wind's resounding bass,
And the thunder of the surge.
Teach me lore of either zone;
Tell me of sea-scenes, sea-sounds,
With sea-changes, varying;
Bid sea-visions surge o'er me,
Wild as ever Hellas disarmed;

Wild as was Poseidon's car,
 Or Tritonus' echoing shell,
 Or the wondrous dolphin-steed
 Captive to Arion's lyre,
 Bearing swift the ocean-merged
 O'er the waves to Tœnarus.
 Were these ancient dreams all baseless?
 O! thou angel of the world,
 They who view the mighty waters
 Cry aloud of them and thee,
 "Beautiful! O beautiful!"
 Angel of the earth and ocean,
 Omnipresent Effluence
 From th' Invisible Supern!
 Beautiful once more I own thee,
 Beautiful! O beautiful!
 Beautiful with all the garlands,
 Beautiful with all the music,
 Beautiful with all the waters,
 Beautiful indeed art thou.

A. MIDDLEMORE MORGAN.

(To be Continued.)

"UNTIL THE DAY BREAK."

SLEEP my beloved, no more storms shall fright thee
 Now He has whispered peace,
 Into the realms of joy His love shall light thee,
 Where Time's fierce tempests cease.

No more the tossing, and the whirlwind, never
 The anguish out at sea,
 But in the quiet of the haven ever
 Thy peaceful home shall be.

His arms enfold thee, in His love eternal
 Thou shalt for ever rest,
 And never can one thought or care external
 Grieve one who is so blest.

Sleep on beloved, we who could not aid thee,
 Can fold thy prayerful hands;
 God for His everlasting glory made thee,
 He knows and understands.

J. B.

IN A SANCTUARY.

THE night was rainy and drear and chill,
Heigh-ho!
And the wind had its way on the moor and the hill,
Heigh-ho!
When my lover came under my window pane,
And he recked not the cold, nor the wind, nor the rain,
And he said, "Come fly with me now, my Jane."
With a Heigh-ho!

'Twas the night before my wedding day,
Heigh-ho!
So I fell on my knees and began to pray.
Heigh-ho!
For I loved my love who was waiting for me,
And I hated my husband that was to be;
And oh! the wet moon was sad to see!
With a Heigh-ho!

I put out my light and stole into bed.
Heigh-ho!
I crossed myself thrice and covered my head.
Heigh-ho!
But I heard his voice above wind and rain,
Saying "Come, for I wait, oh come! my Jane!"
And my heart was breaking and wild my brain.
With a Heigh-ho!

But when morning came they brought me word.
Heigh-ho!
That my lover was drowned in crossing the ford.
Heigh-ho!
Then up I rose and hither I fled,
And I swore by the Holy Virgin's head,
That who came to wed me should find me dead,
With a Heigh-ho!

P. H. HERBERT.

OUR JEUNESSE DORÉE.

ALPHA.

WITH sense enough to steer just clear of folly
 With a light, empty heart—more gay than jolly;
 With subtle speech, but harsh discordant laugh,
 Scant sense of wit, but wond'rous skill in "chaff."

BETA.

Sulkily silent—generous, but gruff,
 Kindly by nature, but in manner rough;
 Simply unconscious of life's higher aims,
 But simply perfect in life's lower games.

GAMMA.

Alert, athletic, agile, brisk, and bold,
 Smooth, pliant, careless, self-contained, and cold;
 At "tricks" and "trumps" ne'er was a greater "dab,"
 A cardomaniac from whist to "grab."

DELTA.

A reader? No—unless the novel's "stunning;"
 This fav'rite book records the "favorite's running;"
 The power of love he does not wholly spurn,
 But loves to flirt with each fair face in turn.

A "CRICHTON."

Crichton at cricket, rowing, running, rinking,
 Of all things in the world he most hates "thinking;"
 If legs and arms could take the place of brains,
 He might take anything—except "take pains."

TWO BRUMMELL'S.

Brummell's in dress and Dervishes in dancing,
 Skilled in the most recondite arts of prancing;
 But oh! *quel horreur*, think of such fine fops
 Taking to "malt" alternately with "hops."

And yet young jaunty saunterers thro' life,
 If you would waken to a nobler strife,
 There's that within you might play higher parts
 Than can be found in games, or tricks with hearts—
 Hence whilst you play, like gamblers o'er a grave,
 Think! there's a heaven to win, a soul to save;
 A splendid game! but do not quite forget
 It can't be won by "biceps," cards, or bet.

Now if this satire's false, all men may bear it,
 He *only* whom the cap *fits* needs to wear it!

JOHN LORD LAKE.

SOME EARLY FRENCH POETS.

No. I.—FRANÇOIS VILLON.

WHILE to the student of literature the fifteenth century in France presents no special feature for remark or admiration, it is singular to note that, in its literary barrenness, it most narrowly corresponds to the political situation of the country. France was in a state of ferment. The victories of Crecy and Agincourt had done much to sap the vitality of the feudal system. The bonds of church despotism were loosening; the sun of chivalry had set; the strident voice of democracy was loudening throughout the land. All was transition, revolt, reform.

Then it is that, in an epoch where history and poetry alike bore traces of a general decay, on the threshold of the Renaissance, last on the list of lyricists of the *Moyen âge*, yet first in the annals of the national poesy of France, we have the man, the poet, to whom, in our humble way, we would direct the readers attention, while we briefly review his life and works.

François Villon was born in Paris in 1461. His parents, as he himself confesses in his *Grand Testament*, were poor and of humble birth. We have also his own authority for the fact that his mother was illiterate and un-educated, when, in a prayer to the Virgin, written at her request, he puts these words into her mouth :—

Femme je suis, povrette et ancienne,
 Ne riens ne scay; oncques lettre ne leuz.

It is not decided as to what trade his father followed, and though some believe him to have been a leatherseller or cordouennier, the evidence upon which this belief is based is taken from an untrustworthy source, and lacks all substantiation.

Certain it is that both his parents were in humble circumstances, and no doubt it was his sympathy with them, coupled with his youthful ambition, which induced him to enter the Paris University, which presented no obstacles to such as he, but where rich and poor studied side by side, sharing the same advantages. And it is here that he is thrown among many other young men of identical birth and means, when, from admiring and imitating their life, in its careless and unrestricted laxity, he in time becomes their hero and chief. Passing over his many escapades, chronicled as they are by some of his enthusiastic disciples in a series of poems, called *Les repeues franches*, we should note that it is at college that his poetic talent is first displayed. Ballads and rondeaux to this and that fair one follow each other rapidly, till at last his pen is destined to bring him into trouble. To some all too scornful madam he sends some piquant ballade, some trenchant satire, dashed it may be with a spice of contempt for the clergy. In her mortification she has recourse to the support of the Church, and as a consequence, our poet is pilloried and condemned to the lash.

This is but a commencement of a series of misfortunes, for later on we hear of his implications in crimes with others, which have death and banishment as their reward. While some of his comrades are hanged as felons, Villon is imprisoned at Meung-sur-Loire. It is probable that here much of his poetry expressive of his distress and invoking aid against the injustice of his sentence, was written. Nor did he write in vain. Through the intercession of Charles, duc d'Orléans, to whom Villon had addressed a touching, and as it happened, a timely appeal, the poet was released, after a confinement of over four years. It was immediately following this release that his *Grand Testament* was composed, wherein are inserted many detached pieces, referring to various epochs of his life, yet without actual reference to the main idea of the poem. These last were doubtless written when in confinement.

Of the later years of his life, of his various journeys to different

parts of France, and (as some allege) to England, of his stay at the court of his patron and protector, Charles d'Orléans, and of the precise date of his death, little is absolutely known, while upon all these subjects much has been conjectured. Rabelais tells us that "Maistre François Villon, sus ces vieux jours se retira à Saint Maixent en Poictou, sous la faveur d'un homme de bien, abbé dudit lieu. Là, pour donner passe temps au peuple, entreprit faire jouer la Passion en gestes et langage poictevin."

Thus, after a life of turbulent anxiety, we have the poet as director of a series of Passion plays, not so much as a means of support, let us hope, as a solace and a recreation in his last days. Yet, as we review this his life, unhappy and miserable as it undoubtedly was, we must not fail to notice that, in all his incurred miseries, unmerited or the reverse, and notwithstanding the dregs of society with which, from his poems, we know that he mixed, Villon never seems to have been without a sense and an appreciation of much that was noble and true. A life such as he led was not all calculated to foster and preserve any elements of a great disposition, yet in his poetry we find parental affection, a mindfulness of any received kindness, great patriotic sympathy, contrition for past misdoings, and for neglected opportunities repeatedly expressed throughout its pages.

In examining those works by which he is known, we find that but little remains to us which is genuinely and undoubtedly his. When we specify the *Petit Testament*, the *Grand Testament*, and some score of detached ballads, we have named all that is indisputably by him, and those many other poems, which from their similarity have been associated and included with the foregoing, if they are attributed to him with more or less certainty can in no wise positively be called his. In noticing his style, all his admirers are agreed that it is the extreme simplicity, the unstudied naturalness of Villon's poems which constitute their chief charm. Not his choice was it to sing the praise of some departed hero, nor to describe and resuscitate some bygone deed of chivalry. It is of his life, of his reflections on mankind and human nature generally, and more particularly of his many struggles with fate that he tells us, in simple and graceful style. He writes of his distress, not so much to enlist sympathy and to command compassion, as

that, being a poet, he cannot help presenting his woes in a poetic light.

But it is in the expression of regret at byegone hours, which return not, in the "remembering happier things," that we have Villon at his best. This is the most noticeable feature in his verse, and, where introduced into a subject otherwise repulsive, is the means of rescuing it from vulgarity and of investing it with an irresistible charm. This is most perfectly illustrated in the poem "Les regrets de la belle Heaulmière," where the quondam "dame galante" mourns the wreck of her youthful charms, as she broods in solitude:—

"A petit feu de chenevottes,
Tost allumées, tost estainctes;
Et jadis fusmes si mignottes!" . . .

Again, in the "Ballade des Dames du Temps Jadis," the same sentiment will be found infused. This latter, together with Mr. Dante Gabriel Rossetti's inimitable translation, we here quote:—

BALLADE DES DAMES DU TEMPS JADIS.

Dictes-moy où, n'en quel pays,
Est Flora, la belle Romaine;
Archipiada, ne Thaïs,
Qui fut sa cousine germaine;
Echo parlant quand bruyt on maine
Dessus rivière ou sus estan,
Qui beauté eut trop plus qu'humaine?
Mais où sont les neiges d'antan!
Où est la très sage Heloïs,
Pour qui fut chastré et puis moyne
Pierre Esbaillart à Saint-Denys?
Pour son amour eut cest essoyne.
Semblablement où est la royne
Qui commanda que Buridan
Fust jetté en ung sac en Seine?
Mais où sont les neiges d'antan!
La royne Blanche comme urglys,
Qui chantoit à voix de sereine;
Berthe au grand pied, Bietris, Allys,
Harembourges, qui tint le Mayne,
Et Jehanne, la bonne Lorraine,
Qu'Anglois bruslèrent à Rouen;
Où sont-ilz, Vierge souveraine?—
Mais où sont les neiges d'antan!

THE BALLAD OF DEAD LADIES.

Tell me now in what hidden way is
Lady Flora, the lovely Roman?
Where's Hipparchia, and where is Thais,
Neither of them the fairer woman?
Where is Echo, beheld of no man,
Only heard on river and mere,—
She, whose beauty was more than human?
But where are the snows of yester-year?
Where's Heloise, the learned nun,
For whose sake Abeillard, I ween,
Lost manhood and put priesthood on?
(From Love he won such dule and teen!)
And where, I pray you, is that Queen
Who willed that Buridan should steer
Sewed in a sack's mouth, down the Seine?
But where are the snows of yester-year?
White Queen Blanche, like a queen of li-
With a voice like any mermaiden; [lies,
Bertha Broadfoot, Beatrice, Alice,
And Ermengarde the lady of Maine,—
And that good Joan, whom Englishmen
At Rouen doomed and burned her there,
Mother of God, where are they then?—
But where are the snows of yester-year?

ENVOI.

Prince, n'enquerez de sepmaine
Où elles sont, ne de cest an,
Que ce refrain ne vous remaine:
Mais où sont les neiges d'antan!

Nay, never ask this week, fair lord,
Where they are gone, nor yet this year,
Except with this for an overword—
But where are the snows of yester-year?

Here, in these few lines, almost a simple catalogue of names,

how much grace and sentiment do we find ! Blended with a pathetic regret at so much beauty which is passed from earth, the patriotic allusion in the last verse to Joan of Arc, calls up at once the Frenchman's sympathy for the much-wronged Pucelle d'Orléans, the saviour of her country. Nor could anything be more exquisitely touching than the refrain which forms the last line of each verse :—

Mais où sont les neiges d'antan !

Again, in illustration of the poet's light-hearted wit, of his touches of humour, and notably of his religious feeling and acknowledgement of things divine, much could be quoted, where all are found blended in curious congruity throughout his verse. Now mournful, now cynical, at times supplicating and entreating, yet anon world-defiant and despairing, his poems become the mirror of the man, as he lived and suffered. And his mark upon the literature of his land was a distinct and abiding one. Before him was no poet : of French bards he was the first. With Woe for a teacher, his knowledge of human nature, and of the more sombre sides of life, was wider and more comprehensive, in a word, *truer* than any possessed by those who had gone before. Hitherto, with few exceptions, it had been but the indolent court Trouvère, who, languishing in royal patronage and the smiles of sovereignty, had now and again struck the lyre of Poesy in accompaniment to some effeminate love-warble, devoid alike of sympathy and world knowledge. Here arises a man of the people, penniless, bourgeois, obscure, who, with novel and individual realism unmasks the hollow allegorical affectations which envelop and disfigure the poetic sentiments of his age, and establishes himself as the first national poet of France.

And those bards of his nation who successively follow him upon the highway of literature, are all unanimous in his praise. Was not Regnier his disciple ? Had he not Boileau as admirer, and Voltaire as imitator ? And, to quote later, do not Béranger and Alfred de Musset owe some of their charm of thought and style to the luckless writer of the *Grand Testament* ? Yet how little dreamed he of a poet's laurels, when alone and desolate in the cells of Meung he sang of his sorrows and of

his distress! That he was great, he knew not then; nor did he ever know it. With him, as with many others, his fame lay in the future, when he should be deemed the poet of his age, and the literary forerunner of those who followed, and to us, methinks, the light of his genius gleams but the brighter from out the dim vistas of the past, in proportion as we picture to ourselves the darkness and isolation through which it first struggled into being.

PERCY EDWARD PINKERTON.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

SECOND ARTICLE—HER LOVE POETRY.

No matter whether the particular impulse of a poet lies in the historical, descriptive, speculative or emotional plane, it is ever true that throughout all he writes an obeisance is made to that which men call Love. It has been universally recognised as, in one or other of its forms, the chief motive power on earth. We will even go further and say that except by abnormal natures it is admitted to be the vital force of humanity. This may appear a little startling when put so strongly, but we scarcely think the proposition requires much proof. Granting, however, that it does, we would support it by saying that Love has done more for the world in the past, is doing more in the present, and is destined to do more in the future than any other influence which operates on human nature. But this assertion would of course be absurd and extravagant if by the term Love was meant only that section or department of it which is believed to constitute the paradise of youths and maidens—that initially unconscious but subsequently manifest affinity of one being towards another of the opposite sex. If Love included no more than that there are misanthropes and sceptics in plenty who not only would scout the doctrine, but affirm and set about proving that if there were less of that style of sentiment it would be better for the world! We must take broader ground if we are to maintain our footing. Accepting the term therefore in the widest and most universal significance—the charity exalted by St. Paul—we find it interpreted as that large-hearted sympathetic interest which covers so

much, and includes within its boundless sweep the many special affections which make a garden of this otherwise barren earth. If we stop at anything short of this much embracing statement, then we forbid the inclusion of those

Loves filial, loves fraternal, neighbour loves
And civic—all fair petals, all good scents,
All reddened, sweetened from one central heart!

and we thereby ignore forces which have ever and anon proved themselves as far-reaching in their influences as the particular passion popularly termed Love. The necessity of such expansion of statement is also obvious when we consider that otherwise we would brand as loveless the numberless multitudes who though gladdened by filial, fraternal, and social loves, have never come under the sway of the special feeling just alluded to. To say that such human beings were in consequence neither receivers nor dispensers of love, and that they were therefore joyless, would be not only to pervert facts but to deny history. Yet although our contention is for a broad and comprehensive view of Love, we must guard our readers against supposing that it is a mere diffusive and vague geniality of feeling which is implied. If this were all it would be to deny love a "local habitation and name," to bestow upon it a will-of-the-wisp character, and to describe it as transient and aimless instead of forceful and definite in its mission. Therefore when Love possesses the soul, whether the subject or object be a mother or a son, a sister or a lover, it seems, for the time, to be the pre-eminent power, because all the other attributes of being are coloured by it, and there is imparted to the whole nature an unwonted concentration and direction. This truth explains what the wrench is which is experienced when something untoward occurs in the relations of loving and loved. If thwarted, human nature has a habit of avenging herself. The whole being having run its resources into this channel which has been cut out by love, if an obstacle is met, one of two things ensues. Should the obnoxious thing be small, the flood sweeps it resistlessly away, as the waterfall did the briar rose. But if on the other hand an upheaval of the very channel itself takes place, then there is agony and waste. It is no subsidiary runlet of ambition, self-seeking, or the like, which is stopped—it is a damming up of the

main stream where all these tributaries have been confluent. Human nature in extremity is a terrible thing.

Something like the foregoing is the theory we have woven out of a consideration of "Aurora Leigh," and of some minor poems of Mrs. Browning. The heroine of the first-named developed the artist in her at the expense of the woman, but after a life devoted to the deification of art, she was obliged passionately to cry:—

Art is much, but Love is more.
O! Art, my Art, thou'rt much, but Love is more!
Art symbolises heaven, but Love is God
And makes heaven. I, Aurora, fell from mine,
I would not be a woman like the rest —
A simple woman who believes in Love.

Here we have an instance of perverted or repressed nature, and nature takes her revenge, for years of personal loss and failure of life-aims are two of the lessons deducible from the story of "Aurora Leigh." In her case, however, bounteous heaven supplied sovereign remedy, and though late in application, its operation was effective and sure. We are thereby prevented from seeing in Aurora Leigh's experience the very ultimate result of perversion of nature, but an illustration of what we mean is provided for us in the weird ballad entitled "The Poet's Vow." In it Mrs. Browning displays quite masculine power of expression allied with keen discernment of the hidden springs of feeling. It commences with a noteworthy thought upon Evening:—

Eve is a two-fold mystery;
The stillness earth doth keep—
The motion wherewith human hearts
Do each to other leap,
As if all souls between the poles
Felt, "Parting comes in sleep."

The Poet sits in his ancient lordly hall alone, his brow calm:—

Yet seemed it in this troubled world
Too calm for gentleness.

* * * *

It lacked, all need, the softening light
Which other brows supply:
We should conjoin the scathed trunks
Of our humanity;
That each leafless spray entwining may
Look softer 'gainst the sky.

What is the reason of this cold abstraction and self-absorption?
Why—

Because this poet daringly,
—The nature at his heart,
And that quick time along his veins
He could not change by art,—
Had vowed his blood of brotherhood
To a stagnant place apart.

He would by separation from mankind, their sympathies, greetings, looks, and hospitalities, seek to isolate himself from that "groaning of the creation" which was burdensome to his ear. He would, in short, write back a part of the primeval curse! The words:

That so my purged, once human heart,
From all the human rent,

give the key to his action. He divides among his crowding friends his silver and his gold, takes leave calmly of them all, and finally is alone with two:—

One loved him true as brothers do,
And one was Rosalind.

The fulfilment of his rash resolve demands that he should now deny his previous affection, and stifle the calls of his heart towards these last and dearest objects. There is no need to quote the faithful remonstrance of the one, nor describe the stony stupefaction of the other, when the full import of his purpose is comprehended. The parting is over, and

He Dwelt alone and sun and moon
Were witness that he made
Rejection of his humanness
Until they seemed to fade;
His face did so, for he did grow
Of his own soul afraid.
The self-poised God may dwell alone
With inward glorying,
But God's chief angel waiteth for
A brother's voice, to sing;
And a lonely creature of sinful nature—
It is an awful thing.

So he passed his days, but her grief killed Rosalind. Ere dying, like another Elaine, she requests that after death she may be borne to the recluse's door, having lying upon her breast a

scroll she has penned. Let us draw near and read a few verses from this parchment :—

I left thee last, a child at heart,
A woman scarce in years,
I come to thee, a solemn corpse
Which neither feels nor fears.
I have no breath to use in sighs ;
They laid the dead-weights on mine eyes
To seal them safe from tears.

Look on me with thy own calm look :
I meet it calm as thou,
No look of thine can change *this* smile,
Or break thy sinful vow ;
I tell thee my poor scorned heart
Is of thine earth—thine earth, a part :
It cannot vex thee now.

* * * *

I have prayed for thee with bursting sobs,
When passion's course was free ;
I have prayed for thee with silent lips,
In the anguish none could see ;
They whispered oft, " She sleepeth soft "—
But I only prayed for thee.

* * * *

I charge thee, by the living's prayer,
And the dead's silentness,
To wring from out thy soul a cry,
Which God shall hear and bless !
Lest Heaven's own palm droop in my hand,
And pale among the saints I stand,
A saint companionless.

These words accomplish their purpose, and conscience-smitten and convicted, the man sees the wrong he has done nature. The punishment is condign—his external signs of grief are dread to see :—

But dreader sight, could such be seen,
His inward mind did lie,
Whose long-subjected humanness
Gave out its lion cry,
And fiercely rent its tenement
In a mortal agony.

* * * *

O broken heart, O broken vow,
That wore so proud a feature !
God, grasping as a thunderbolt
The man's rejected nature,
Smote him therewith i' the presence high
Of his so worshipped earth and sky
That looked on, all indifferently—
A wailing human creature.

A human creature found too weak
To bear his human pain—
(May Heaven's dear grace have spoken peace
To his dying heart and brain !)
For when they came at dawn of day
To lift the lady's corpse away,
Her bier was holding twain.

But some may ask how it is that such pictures, solemn even to tragedy, are presented for contemplation, when ostensibly we are considering the pleasantly suggestive theme of Love. To which question we reply that hereby we obtain a clue to follow all Mrs. Browning's poetry on the subject, and if we have dwelt apparently long on the unattractive side, it is because we believe that by this course we shall be much helped in what remains of our study. It will be seen from our reference to "Aurora Leigh" and to "The Poet's Vow," that Mrs. Browning's theory is that it is wrong to ignore, thwart, or repress human love. With the ethics of this proposition we shall not now deal, but shall leave the discussion over for a later article. Contenting ourselves in the meantime with simply stating it, we find it resolves itself in Mrs. Browning's view into this ;—that Love, so far from being one of the airiest and lightest of emotions, is the most serious, because it is the sum of them all. Now, while again refraining at this stage from pronouncing an opinion on the theory itself as thus paraphrased, we have two presumptions that our inference is really correct that it is her theory. The first is that it is quite in consonance with the style of her muse, which was so introspective and subjective ; and the second is that the pensive character of a great portion of her life would dispose her to such a theory. Both these presumptions will be found reasonable when we, further on, consider her sonnets and see how we are borne out by her actual words. Just now we would only wish to make clear that in her love poetry there is none of that frolicsome gaiety, the butterfly-like flitting about from fancy to fancy discernible in many poets. There is not the vigorous abandon and light-heartedness which may be recalled (to take the best known example) as characteristic of some of Burns' lyrics. In her eyes love was a solemn thing, or, to vary the figure, a visitant to be grateful for, and to whom the reverence due to celestials should be paid. Moreover, we must remember that she viewed the

question from a woman's standpoint, which to her thinking deals more with surrender than with taking, as will be evident by a quotation from "Amy's Cruelty," which explains itself:—

"Fair Amy of the terraced house,
Assist me to discover
Why you who would not hurt a mouse
Can torture so your lover."

* * * *

She shook her head—"The mouse and bee
For crumb or flower will linger;
The dog is happy at my knee,
The cat purrs at my finger.

"But *he*—to *him*, the least thing given,
Means great things at a distance;
He wants my world, my sun, my heaven,
Soul, body, whole existence.

* * * *

"Unless he gives me all in change,
I forfeit all things by him;
The risk is terrible and strange—
I tremble, doubt—deny him.

"He's sweetest friend or hardest foe,
Best angel or worst devil;
I either hate or—love him so,
I can't be merely civil.

* * * *

"Dear neighbour of the trellised house,
A man should murmur never,
Though treated worse than dog and mouse
Till doated on for ever!"

Four stanzas taken at random from "Parting Lovers" convey the same deep, serious, woman-view of the subject. On the eve of a battle an Italian girl says farewell to her lover:—

I love thee, love thee, Giulio!
Some call me cold, and some demure!
And if thou hast ever guessed that so
I loved thee—well, the proof was poor,
And no one could be sure.

* * * *

I love thee! It is understood,
Confest; I do not shrink or start.
No blushes! all my body's blood
Has gone to greaten this poor heart,
That, loving, we may part.

* * * *

Heroic males the country bears,—
But daughters give up more than sons;
Flags wave, drums beat, and unawares
You flash your souls out with the guns,
And take your heaven at once!

But we!—we empty heart and home
 Of life's life—love! We bear to think
 You're gone,—to feel you may not come,—
 To hear the door-latch stir and clink,
 Yet no more you!—nor sink!

“A Woman's Shortcomings,” “A Valediction,” “Confessions,” all convey the same idea of the immeasurably weighty significance of the interchange of affection. We have room for only one verse from the first-named piece in which a coquette is admonished thus:—

Unless you can muse in a crowd all day,
 On the absent face that fixed you;
 Unless you can love as the angels may,
 With the breath of heaven betwixt you;
 Unless you can dream that his faith is fast,
 Through behoving and unbehoving;
 Unless you can *die* when the dream is past—
 Oh! never call it loving!

In one of her best known short pieces, Mrs. Browning frames a rather serious indictment against the members of the male sex. Under the title, “A Man's Requirements,” she recounts all the “hows,” “wheres,” and “whens” which make up a man's ideal of the love he should receive from a woman. He would be loved with her voice, her eyes, her hand, her heart:—

Love me with thy thinking soul,
 Break it to love-sighing;
 Love me with thy thoughts that roll
 On through living—dying.

Love me in thy gorgeous airs,
 When the world has crowned thee;
 Love me kneeling at thy prayers,
 With the angels round thee.

Through all hopes that keep us brave,
 Further off or nigher,
 Love me for the house and grave,
 And for something higher!

In return for all this devotion which he demands, the response on his part is—what?—

Thus, if thou wilt prove me, dear,
 Woman's love no fable,
 I will love *thee*—half a year—
 As a man is able.

For examples of how especially tender, grave, and exquisite Mrs.

Browning's language is when she sings of lonely, parted, or dying lovers we can but refer our readers to "Bertha in the Lane," "A Valediction," "That Day," "Loved Once." Extracts would not do justice to them. They should be read entire.

If our readers will revert to the opening sentences of the present article, where we endeavoured to define Mrs. Browning's very high ideal of Love's place and mission, they will be in a position to study with unusual interest the "Sonnets from the Portuguese." For while it is true that, owing to the impossibility of completely ignoring personal idiosyncracies, all poets are to a greater or lesser degree revealed in their general writings, there are portions of their works which are quite manifestly pourtrayals of what they themselves have felt, not of what they have observed in others. It is a truism to say that such passages would never have existed had they depended for conception on external observation and not been the outcome of personal experience. Their very *raison d'être* is their experiential character. Therefore, although in this connection Mrs. Browning's special genius has betrayed itself pretty fully in the love poems we have already quoted, none of these is so personal that it could be identified as part and parcel of her own proper history. Herein lies the difference between these poems and the "Sonnets from the Portuguese," published under the guise of translations, from motives of delicacy easily understood, but universally admitted to be a psychological study of which she herself is the subject. Just in proportion, too, as we have conceived of Mrs. Browning's genius and achievements in other departments will we be fascinated by what she says when she generously reveals her own inmost feelings at the most exceptional period of her exceptional life. From one who unites such a power of analysing human experience to the splendour of expression that she possesses, it is fitting to expect something unique when she touches a string like this. Nor has the world been disappointed, for these sonnets are unsurpassed in literature. In idea and form they are so fine that they may be pronounced perfect, and they are so delicate in language that even the most appreciative criticism would appear clumsy and undesirable. In place of analysing, therefore, we will sketch cursorily the plan and argument, leaving our readers to find the beauties for themselves.

Pensive by nature, fragile and bowed down by suffering, through long years she looked straight into the grave. Was it possible that any one could see aught to attract, much less anything to love, in one so bereft of the buoyancy and grace usually attendant on sound bodily health? If any feeling moved her-wards it must surely be only a pitiful sympathy! Yet it was to her, and not to another, that one whom she designates a Princely Heart comes to offer, not pity, but Love. Her own words are:—

The footsteps of thy soul . . . stole
Betwixt me and the dreadful outer brink
Of obvious death where I, who thought to sink,
Was caught up into Love, and taught the whole
Of life in a new rhythm.

Deeply impressed with the conviction that the only return she can make for all this must be merely passive, since it cannot take the form of active ministry, with most transparent meekness she thus depreciates her own nature:—

Can it be right to give what I can give?
To let thee sit beneath the fall of tears
As salt as mine? We are not peers,
So to be lovers!

Is it through coldness or insensibility that thus she cannot make an adequate acknowledgement? Oh no, but because she is so very poor in the wherewithal to give. See the sublime humility in these words:—

For frequent tears have run
The colours from my life, and left so dead
And pale a stuff, it were not fitly done
To give the same as pillow to thy head—
Go farther! let it serve to trample on!

Gaining courage, however, from her feeling that "Love, mere love, is beautiful indeed, and worthy of acceptance," and acknowledging that—

Conquering
May prove as lordly and complete a thing
In lifting upward as in crushing low,

she, "as a vanquished soldier yields his sword to one who lifts him from the bloody earth," yields without further parley:—

Even so, beloved, I at last record
Here ends my strife. If *thou* invite me forth,
I rise above abasement at the word.

She can render little service to her Lover, but what little is in her power she will make him welcome to. Disclaiming her ability to do more than "pipe against the valley nightingale, a melancholy music," her husband is free to use her as a hope to sing gladly by, or a fine sad memory to interfuse with his songs. True to its elevating mission, however, Love makes her grow "serene and strong," until at last she is satisfied she can give as she receives. With splendid confidence in her own devotion she can now say:—

* * Our two souls stand up erect and strong,
Face to face, silent, drawing nigh and nigher,
Until the lengthening wings break into fire
At either curvèd point.

Thus the heart which was wont to be so heavy that she could scarce lift it above the forlorn world, disappears, and where?—

* * Then thou didst bid me bring
And let it drop adown thy calmly great
Deep being. Fast it sinketh * * *

The climax of the matter is reached in the forty-third sonnet which is so beautifully comprehensive in its reversal of all initial fears that we quote it entire:—

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of Being and ideal Grace.
I love thee to the level of every day's
Most quiet need, by sun and candlelight.
I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.
I love thee with the passion put to use
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
With my lost saints,—I love thee with the breath,
Smiles, tears, of all my life! and, if God choose,
I shall but love thee better after death.

Such are the "Sonnets from the Portuguese," and there is so much progression and unfolding of experience upon experience, that not only are they of surpassing interest as disclosing somewhat of the soul-life of the two persons principally concerned, but they are beautiful as a literary study. Moreover, as already indicated they are a psychological growth, and clothed as the thoughts invariably are, in delicate spirit-like language they present a complete and

satisfying entity. The first sonnet is needed, and so is the last. If we leave out the first we miss the base upon which the structure is reared, and if we leave out the last we have a pyramid without the apex! They are forty-four in number, and each enfolds one perfect, rounded idea. The sonnets being progressive, each deals with a more advanced state of experience than the one which preceded it, and so subtle is the process of advance that the fineness of the thought expressed is oftentimes the chiefest charm. It is in keeping with her story that a faint undertone of sadness or rather solemnity should pervade not only the sonnets but all Mrs. Browning's love poetry. But, knowing how circumstances colour thought and feeling, we cease to wonder that she touches this chord of love in a less playful manner than we are accustomed to. It must be kept ever in mind that for great part of her life Mrs. Browning was couch-ridden, shut in from the world through all that period when youth is most eager and feelings are freshest. Nor was it till comparatively late in her life that Love visited herself since she was about thirty-seven when she married Mr. Browning. Who knows what the influence may have been of these long years of seclusion, of observation of others fortunes, and introspection of her own heart, on the moulding of her love poems. What wonder that she deemed Love a sacred thing, and put her heart in the sonnets we have just been considering! At all events they are eloquent of the absorbing nature of the affinity which existed between the two poets. In our former article we quoted Mr. Browning's fine tribute to his wife, and now taking these poems as hers to him we catch a glimpse of the perfect mingling of soul with soul.

This beautiful confusion of identity is powerfully put by Mr. Swinburne in his latest poem—"The Sailing of the Swallow." In a passage of subtle thought Tristram is made to address Iseult:—

Thy soul is shed into me with thy breath,
And in my heart each heartbeat of thee saith
How in thy life the life-springs of me lie,
Even one life to be gathered of one death
In me and thee, though day may live and die.

*

*

*

*

*

Ah, who knows yet if one be twain or one,
And sunlight separable again from sun,

And I from thee with all my life-spring dry,
And thou from me with all thine heartbeats done,
Dead separate souls while day shall live and die?

Here we lay down our pen for the second time on this subject. We shall resume it next month in an article devoted to "Aurora Leigh."

DUNCAN MACCOLL.

(To be Continued).

STREWN ASHES.

BY ALFRED HARBLON.

THE RESPONSE.

FROM the breast of evening, on wings of night
A voice was heard from the lips of love,
Broken and banished from light and sight,
A murmur awoke from the hills above,
A wandering whisper, that as a dove
Fled to a rest from her faltering flight.

Under the hillocks of tangled grass
I lie and listen; it may be so,
That some soft breathing of thine may pass,
To kiss my mouth in its dying throe,
Some sweet murmur, half stilled and low,
May follow the roots of the sassafras.

Do I see how you love me? I know full well
That were love but light I had lived in flame,
There are but we twain who can know and tell
That love has been with us a more than name,
Had life been thus,—but we give no blame
To death, for dying has wrought no spell.

And the after-death?—In a golden light
Of heaven and glory to spend my days,
And yet there lingers within my sight
Regrets not crushed in the olden ways,
Minutes removed from the ceaseless praise,
And the greatest glory, is deepest night.

And my hope in heaven is earth: I knew
That you were my God, and my sun your love;
The only glory that fled or flew
In my path like gold in the light above,
Were the severed sun-beams that rose and throve
From the mists of earth and the morning dew.

Resting again in the rain-wet ground,
Though I see you not, there are sounds I hear,
That tell me now that you have not found
A resting-place, O my Love, my dear!
Ah! I love you yet, and I wake and fear
A double death should my love rebound.

It is dark and lonely; no light, no hope;
The blading grass is a friend to me,
The grains of sand have more sight and scope,
The drips of rain in the surging sea;
All these have part in the world's decree,
But with fate as ours, can we toil or cope?

Farewell! There are they who have seen no grief,
I would not be they; there are some griefs dear,
Though I live again to you I would lief
That we loved to lose; I should never fear
To lose you, seeing how death brings near
To living, and loving, and pain, relief.

Farewell! My Love, there is death for all,
A sweet long sleep through the burning day,
We wake and sleep as the seasons fall,
Sleep in the winter and wake in May,
Slumber and dream till the first clear ray
Lights our lips, when the swallows call.

EVENING AND MORNING.

THE sun's last rays, through old stained windows stealing,
 Glisten on tomb and shrine;
 The song of bells through twilight softly pealing,
 Speeds on its way divine.

Save by these sounds the silence is unbroken,
 Speech even dies away,
 Our hearts are full, the fulness is unbroken,
 We mourn the dying day.

The organ rolls its echoes through the portals,
 Into the cool grey air,
 A message borne from mortals to immortals,
 Laden with praise and prayer.

Here sin and strife are purgèd and forgotten,
 Thought is forbidden here,
 And scorn, that is of sin and thought begotten,
 Is wrapt with awe and fear.

Here with the twilight shadowing man's glory,
 Here soothly could we die,
 The night winds only whispering our story,
 As they glide gently by.

To leave a life so sweet, so sad, so bitter,
 For sleep and dreamless death,
 Yea, to forsake the fervour and the glitter,
 And gold that perisheth,

To seek the land of shadow and of sleeping,
 If such perchance there be,
 That was create before our lives were steeping
 In sin and mystery.

* * * * *

The sun has died away, and in his dying
 Ushered in gloom and night,
 The altar, and the praises, and the sighing
 Fade with the faded light.

Yet through the darkness is the anthem swelling,
 Winging its heavenly way,
 From aching earth, and night's black cloudlets welling,
 To meet the dawning day.

Then faith and fancy with the night shall perish,
 With day-break there shall dawn
 A strong bold hope, that will not hold or cherish
 These faultless dreams forsworn.

The message shall go forth : " Lo, ye have waited
 Through twilight and through night,
 The gloom engulfing us hath now abated,
 Come forth to live in light."

" Ye were contented then to see the vision
 Your fathers feared before,
 Now day has dawned, hold dreams in your arision,
 Light lives for evermore."

GOOD FRIDAY, 1875.

(To be Continued).

CLYTIE.

O PHŒBUS!—is my perfume all too weak,
 Or my love-offering worthless in thy sight,
 That I should turn for ever towards thy light
 To find but denser darkness? I can speak
 Of nothing in this world—nor will I seek
 To verse my soul in aught, save love for thee—
 Nor think of aught but thy fair majesty,
 As when I saw thee stoop to meet the meek
 Shy glance of fair Leucothea. I apart,
 Saw all thy light and love, withheld from me,
 Rain down on her, thy scorn did through me dart,
 Scorching as ice in its frigidity;
 And now, even now, ah me! my tortured heart!
 Thou pour'st thy love o'er the ambrosial tree.

LAON.

DURING THE PLAGUE, 1666.

“BRING out the dead!” My dead are four—
Ye took them duly from the door:
One, and two, and one again,
Two in the moonlight, and two in the rain;
I standing stark by the window pane,
Gave up my dead—I own no more.

I was an orphan pale and poor,
Who came from the West to my uncle's door;
He had Indian gold and store,
He had up-lifted the name we bore.
Up, he rose from his oaken chair—
Harold and Harry stood here and there,
(Harold and Harry were twin. The twain
Went to one grave in the sobbing rain.)
Came Lucine, in her silken sheen,
Was she a fairy, or was she a queen?
The like of her I never had seen.
Blessed was the four-fold welcome said,
Blessed was the board, and blessed the bed
Where Lucine, as morning broke,
Came out and kissed me, before I woke.

I am orphaned again and poor,
'Mid Eastern stuffs and silver store,
That buy but weekly bread for one—
They leave it near the threshold stone,
And cleanse my coin before they take—
Is it a dream—and shall I awake,
And meet Lucine, with braided hair,
And ruffled apron, on the stair,
And so go down to Morning Prayer?

Were she inearthed under yew and willow,
With a daisied quilt and a grassy pillow,
We yet might pass the days together;
I'd come and knit, through the summer weather,

And count the chimes, and never would go
 Till all her grave was white with snow—
 But she lies in a place, befouled, unfit,
 In the miry clay of the horrible pit,—
 Royal David, who wrote that line
 Bemoaned the like in Palestine.
 Mouse so wee, is there never a crumb?
 Wait with me till the basket come.

It comes with bread, and eggs, and milk:
 Once, someone added a bunch of flowers,
 God thank the stranger!—tied up with silk—
 And bringing a vision of dewy hours,
 And beaded grass, and the sentinel sedge
 That guards the crystal water edge.

I keep the silk in my little red book;
 But I have ceased to read therein—
 For all the lines seem jagged and look
 As if the hand of the Printer shook—
 God forgive me if this be sin.

* * * * *

Thou wast our strength and our stay!
 Tho' in the chancels, the moth
 Is fretting thine altar cloth;
 Tho' the dust of our hearthstones^{dim}
 Is stirred by no household hymn.
 Wilt Thou forget us to-day?
 Shall the strength of our manhood decay,
 And rot like a peach away?
 Shall our children cease to play,
 And our maids to welcome May,
 When a touch of Thy healing hand
 Would quicken a sorrowing land?
 I am weak, but I rise—I stand—
 I will sweep the room and pray.

M. L. J.

REVIEWS.

WILLIAM ALFRED GIBBS.

As ready a way as any to get at the secret of a poet's motive is to examine, where there is the opportunity, his own theory of the poetical sphere. Mr. Gibbs fortunately has been explicit enough as to what he takes to be his mission. Speaking of the necessity for swift sure work on the poet's part, it is not his, he says:—

Not his with demonstration to convince
Th' unwilling minds of disputations men,
By laboured logic and close inference;
But with swift intuition to condense
A "learned treatise" to a single line,
And with clear introspection piercing thro'
A cloud of words, to reach the central sense,
And speak it out with fearless utterance;
Thus wakening men to think, to seek, to find,
From deeper sources "if these things be so."

It would not be correct to infer from this that Mr. Gibbs is a didactic poet: he is rather a poet of earnest conviction and intense moral earnestness, whose firm belief is that humanity has a grand destiny before it, of which the bards of each age have a clearer view than the busy, absorbed men of the world; and hence the poet's message to his fellow men should not merely titillate the ears and gratify the tastes of the fastidious few, but rouse the hearts and stir the souls of all—of all, at least, who are not hopelessly sunk in selfish or cynical apathy. It is as Bards, or, to recast an old-world word, as "See-ers," that he would have our poets claim their place and power in the state—not as lascivious twanglers upon old lutes—not as superfinical "French-polishers" of phrases—not as metaphysical hair-splitters, but as clear-voiced and fearless heralds announcing the truths of the future. It is theirs to warn fully as much as to entertain—not merely to interest the understanding but to stir the soul. A hand holding aloft a fiery cross is emblazoned on the front of his volumes, as index to the pervading spirit within. The poet is as one whose whole soul is gathered up to perform the one duty of reminding his fellows that they are expected to be active and manly, and he is conscious that his own efforts can only be a contribution to the general result:

I have carried the fiery cross
Through its belt of wounding thorn,
Thro' a painful course of sorrow and loss,
Thro' apathy, anger, and scorn.

I strike it now on the rock,
 And its sparks fly far and wide,
 And some it will shock, and many will mock,
 And its warning light deride.
 Yet brothers quench not the brand,
 But seize it and bear it higher ;
 For this smould'ring brand, in a fearless hand,
 Shall kindle the Beacon fire.
 And that Beacon-flame will blaze
 With its friendly warning light,
 Until the rays of the coming days
 Shall dispel the dang'rous night.
 From a thousand homes, that flame,—
 Set aglow by the fiery cross,—
 Will avert the shame of a blighted name,
 And the anguish of fierce remorse.

The poet, then, is no idle singer of an empty day. His work is aglow with that ancient Greek spirit which denoted, under a similar suggestive figure, the activity implied in the distribution of knowledge. "Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." "Who will show us any good?" The poet, in his privileged position of interpreter, should be able to give us the most solemn impression of our responsibility. It is a point of much interest that a poet identifies himself with the struggle of life—expresses a readiness to meet difficulties at their very worst—and at the same time approves himself a capable and willing guide to others. In a poem in Spenserian stanza, Mr. Gibbs essays an answer to the profound enigma "What is Life?" He insists upon man's own activity, his right respect for that true nobility which is his birthright, and his faith in the teaching that inculcates belief in ultimate perfection :—

To-day we labour and to-morrow die ;
 Such be our motto—such our war-cry then,
 And, like true soldiers, waste nor thought nor sigh,
 Save to fulfil our destinies, like men,
 For all things there is time and place, and when
 Our comrades fall around us thick and fast
 And our torn banners sink and rise again—
 We heed no future, and we have no past,
 We listen only to the "Present's" clarion blast.
 But when the day of battle giveth place
 To the still evening, and the night clouds throw
 Their shadows o'er the field, and face to face
 'Neath the black-vaulted sky with our stern foe
 We stand alone in silence and in woe

Mourning with bitter grief our cherished dead
 Whom, on the earth, we never more shall know,—
 'Tis then that Meditation lifts her head
 And bids us pierce the gloom thro' which their spirits fled.
 In that still hour Faith riseth in the heart,
 The evening star within the dark profound;
 Slowly the curtains of the death-clouds part,
 Opening a new horizon—hallowed ground—
 Beyond the western sunset's furthest bound:
 Fair golden islands bathed in seas of light
 Where joy and peace th' enfranchised souls surround,
 Where Knowledge findeth wings to aid her flight
 Thro' God's unnumber'd realms of ever new delight.

A healthy contempt for lack of sincerity, for that action which is worse than inactivity, and for that self-seeking which precludes self-respect characterizes the ethical spirit of Mr. Gibbs. He has no patience with the bedecked jackdaw, and he pithily exposes that flippancy which so largely regulates the fashion or tone of modern society. His own honesty and steadfastness of purpose, his appreciation of the serious business of life, and his suspicion that even the fiery cross itself may be neglected, place him in strong contrast and direct opposition to whatever is not earnest, virtuous, manly:—

The poet speaks to a world half dead,
 Such words as a poet should say,
 And much is written, and much is read,
 But the dead world goes on its way.

This spirit pervades his clever satirical "Modern Criticisms," and the stately poems in Spenserian verse, "Kings," and "On the Rhine," and finds a brilliant climax in that funny, wayward, roistering, verbal and musical treat, "Kling-Klang and Klong, or Everything Wrong." Pope wrote a philosophical treatise, of much learning and solemnity, to prove that "whatever is is right," notwithstanding the remarkable acuteness and powerful arguments of cynical and sceptical philosophers. Mr. Gibbs writes a charming poem—filled with fun—to expose absurdities, and redolent of wisdom through overlying folly—in order to prove very much the same thing as his philosophical predecessor. Everything is right, in spite of the superficial critics and their admirers, whose duty it is to show that everything is wrong. "Kling-Klang and Klong" is a unique and very remarkable poem. It is the apotheosis—the poetical interpretation—of that ancient satire "Punch and Judy," so

variedly attractive yet so curiously problematical. It portrays with brilliant success the endless struggle that pervades social relationships, and the difficulty there is in apprehending clearly what is beyond the din and confusion. As "an experiment in metre" (as the author calls it), the poem deserves close attention. It displays wonderful readiness and skill in the mere employment of words for special purposes, a quick sense of likeness and contrast, and sharp appreciation of fitness. Some of the word-playing is exceedingly clever—quite equal to the best manner of Hood—and there are stanzas that so happily meet their purpose as to have made their way into the region of stock quotations :—

Flute flouts at cornet, and trumpet at drum,
 Bassoon in bass viol no merit can see,
 Oboe's a slow boy and bagpipe's a "hum,"
 And fiddle thinks all the rest fiddle-dee-dee.

* * * * *

Wrong in the stables, the kitchen, the dairy,
 Wrong in the city, the garden, the farm,
 Cook, nurse, and housekeeper, John, James, and Mary,
 Do everything wrong, do nothing but harm.

"Everything wrong, everything wrong,"
 'Twas the chorus of devils deep down in hell,
 When man was first weak, and temptation was strong,
 And the apple was bitten, and poor Adam fell!

The illustrative fable is exceedingly apt and graphic. Withal there is the strong moral purpose of the poem—culminating in rebuke of selfishness—which gives it substantial value, and renders it consistent with the author's theory of the poet's mission.

Put out thy self's rushlight, for that only shows
 Visible darkness, and shadowy things
 Riding on nightmares to break thy repose,
 The bat with its blindness, the gnat with its stings.

Open the shutters, and draw up the blind
 Let in the healthy and natural light
 There may not be much, but enough still to find,
 Not "everything wrong," but "everything right."

Besides the poems already noticed, there are four volumes illustrative of Mr. Gibbs's philosophy. They stand in couples—"The Story of a Life" and "Harold Erle," "Arlon Grange" and "The Battle of the Standard." The basis of the first is that frequent serious domestic skeleton, the intermarriage of relations; a social error charged with tragic possibilities. In this instance, the cause produces its normal effect, with all the terrible conse-

quences. Actual madness dashes the happiness of one close-knit family, and impends over two generations. The involved psychology is treated with rare skill and sympathetic breadth, the root principle being the doctrine that virtue is its own reward. "The Story of a Life" deals with men and women whose lot forbade that they should ever—

Read their hist'ry in a nation's eyes,

But their deeds and their sufferings, their devotion and their heroism, are fraught for all time with universal interest. The beloved and loving mother suddenly becomes the victim of the previous thoughtlessness, and thence come harrowing grief, a mystery ever-growing for outsiders, and a struggle for the sufferers between love and duty. The great nobility of the stricken husband and father is delicately and powerfully sketched. This is how he bore the direct force of the blow :—

Oh! had he in those hours of wretchedness
 Stood up in sternness, with the Stoic's pride,
 A blow so heavy must have broke his heart ;
 But in humility he bowed his head,
 And that vast avalanche of grief passed down,
 Leaving its streaks of snow amidst his hair,
 And channell'd furrows o'er his saddened brow.

So too, when after various unavailing pretexts he has to face the ordeal of explaining the dread family secret to the ardent young lover of his beautiful daughter Eva, there is a situation of the most touching kind :—

Then, with a glistening eye and quivering lip,
 And swelling veins that stood out from his brow
 Like cords o'erstrained by pressure from within,
 He, from the buried memories of the Past
 Called up the Mindless Body of the Dead,
 To point with warning hand at Destiny.

It is a difficult thing to manage such depth of condensed misery, and almost fierce dramatic intensity, but Mr. Gibbs shows that he has full command of the subject. The union that takes place, spite of "this dreadful thing," leads to the "Sequel" in which the rising and falling fortunes of the two families are traced in the most skilful and interesting way. The whole is an admirable commentary on the doctrine of Socrates, *in epitaphio* as Cicero puts it, that the man who leans upon himself has discovered the true method of living well. There are side episodes, such as that of

Margaret and George Glenroy, that are set with the delicacy due to the importance of minor jewels, and there is one faultless lyric which catches with rare felicity the link between nature and human nature. The son Harold and the younger daughters Maude and Mabel find a world of their own in their love of artistic beauty, which but for life's stern ploughshare seems likely to last for ever. Mabel's pathetic appeal denotes that fortune has again broken up a happy home:—

Little birds, thoughtless birds, do not sing to-day,
 Be not merry at our mourning, for we go away,
 Oh! be silenced by our sadness,
 See ye not our tears?
 We are leaving joy and gladness,
 Leaving you for years.
 Oh ye birds, cruel birds!
 Why are ye so gay?
 Sorrow, sorrow for to-morrow—
 We must go away.

In "Harold Erle" the career of the only son of the family is traced. This poem evinces greater maturity in every way than its predecessor. The blank verse flows more easily, recalling the narrative ease of Wordsworth. In loftiness of tone and quiet moral strength there is an affinity to Cowper. Entire absence of effort for mere effect, and corresponding naturalness of movement, the pleasing features of the previous work, are even more apparent here. It is a book of interesting episodes in an obscure but noble life. We have here depicted the boy, the youth, and the man—school, love, and care. Harold being a poet, there is room for some trenchant dealing with those who settle the laws of taste and those who believe in them. The author retains his dignity throughout, and even when administering chastisement he never forgets that moral reserve which should guide the poet in "wakening men to think, to seek, to find." Another beautiful lyric, "I had a dream," adds a pathetic grace to this powerful psychological poem. Let it just be added that this is a work with perennial elements in it—one of those studies that will represent the artistic outcome of this age to the coming generations. Harold illustrates the author's own poetical standpoint:—

Not his the skill to shape with dainty art
 Lascivious legends for a dainty ear,—
 Nor his the pliant voice to join the choir
 Of Baal's priesthood in their choral chant

To gods of popularity and gold ;
 But with straightforward singleness of aim
 He seized the right, and struck with it at wrong,
 E'en in defiance of a world in arms.

In "Arlon Grange" and "The Battle of the Standard," Mr. Gibbs illustrates further the same high principle. In these he comes upon Sir Walter Scott's ground, and worthily asserts his claim to attention. All who admire "Rokeby" and "Marmion" should find time to study and appreciate the rare beauties of these poems. In "Arlon Grange" domestic misfortunes evoke native nobility, and the result illustrates at once the law of triumphant perseverance and the doctrine that "There's a Providence that shapes our ends." This is what it comes to at the "beginning of the end :"—

The sun shines bright on Arlon Grange ;
 Soft winds sweep over its fields
 Bringing a joy more sweet and strange
 Than even the spring-tide yields.

For after many a chance and change
 And many eventful years
 Old days have come back to Arlon Grange
 And the sun shines bright, thro' tears.

It is our poet's hearty contempt for what is dishonest, unfair, or unworthy that inspires him with admiration for honest labour. It runs through all his works, being in this poem the special dress of heroism, while in "Harold Erle" it forms the subject of one of the most interesting episodes, and the contrasted sentiment postulates brilliant invective in the "Battle of the Standard."

Out of Arlon Grange springs a delightful "Christmas Legend," a rare poetical gem, which the author happily prints in black letter :—

'Tis a legend of a castle, of a castle by the sea,
 Which threescore years ago, and more, an old, old man told me.

The "Legend" is of the days of Stephen, and its management fully prepares us for the poet's skilful resuscitation of the knight and his concomitants in the "Battle." In this poem there are several felicitous lyrics—a department in which Mr. Gibbs is always master of high excellence—and the morality is strong and healthy. The blank verse of the narrative prevents the same easy movement as the familiar octosyllabics of Scott, but the plot is well conceived and skilfully developed. When it is said that the

battle-scene is not so grand and thrilling as "Flodden," that is simply to add new testimony to the fact that here there is but one Homer, and Scott is his prophet. This, however, evinces the true spirit :—

Now was the time for Ranoulf and his men
To shoot their last few arrows closer in
And then burst forward with the men-at-arms
Gleaning up axe or claymore as they ran ;
And hark ! the thund'ring gallop of the knights
Shaking the earth beneath them as they rode !
With levelled lances held in iron grasp,
With teeth set hard, and saddle firmly gripped,
Like long-pent storm they burst upon the foe ;
A few rash gallant Scottish knights rode out
With hopeless bravery to dare the shock,
But horse and man went down before the storm
Like ripened corn before the rushing hail.

Mr. Gibbs holds a safe and independent place both as a lyrist and a writer of narrative verse. He is a master of melody, and has a notable power of clear incisive expression. Above all, he teaches a sound philosophy : his aim is to ennoble what is pure, and lovely, and of good report. He summons men to be up and doing while it is called to-day. He deplores thoughtlessness and inaction ; he rejoices in sincerity and zeal. His enthusiasm is based on the serious conviction—forced at times with emphasis on every thinking man—that our essence abides not in our humanity. What has been so variously expressed, Mr. Gibbs figures, with earnestness and power, in his deservedly well-known song, entitled "Shadows :"—

Shadows ! O ye shadows ! that before me pass !
We are all shadows ! shadows on the grass !

THOMAS BAYNE.

"Poems and Sonnets," by H. GREENOUGH SMITH, B.A.—(Samuel Tinsley, Southampton Street, Strand.)—A book replete with poetry and passion's purity ; arresting and chaining the attention with births of new beauty on every page. We are proud to have the author's name on the *roll-call* of our magazine. The following is taken from a brief hymn :—

TO JOVE.

Fierce, luxurious passion-fated
God, of old unsatiated,

E'en with hot delicious kisses of sky-queens white-limbed and sweet;
 Have earth's daughters grown untender
 Since the olden holy splendour,
 When Ægina, fiery-sandalled, felt the clear flame sting her feet?

 We are weary, hope is deadened,;
 And with eyes down-dropt and saddened
 Wait we listening, silent-hearted, for the voice our fathers heard;
 But in vain, in vain we hearken,
 As the solemn ages darken,
 For the hollow Tempe husheth, and still silence broods unstirred.

"Sappho," by STELLA.—(Trubner & Co.)—We learn from the title page that this is "a tragedy in five acts." Having carefully looked through the work, we must pronounce it to be an ambitious attempt, and well carried out. We wish we had leisure to study it page by page, feeling sure that we should be well repaid for time thus spent. The dialogues are realistic, and the interest in the plot does not diminish throughout. We quote some passionate words of the beautiful Sappho in reply to Erinna, one of her pupils, who says:—

Alcæus loves thee with a love all-seeing:
 Pisistratus, Phalaris, poets, umpires
 Are dying for thee.

SAPPHO.

Seas of such love would leave my heart athirst.
 Kings have no hearts, and therefore cannot love.
 Poets have hearts, but worst of lovers prove.
 Kings mate themselves upon Ambition's terms,
 Poets on Vanity's or Passion's whims,
 I seek a heart whose instincts are too high,
 To bend to either. Love that brooks no curb,
 But burns its way untrammelled as the comet.

There are also many exquisite lyrics interspersed with the blank verse; and the drama concludes with a touching appeal to matrons and maids of the nineteenth century:

 All who have truly loved!
 Whose lovers, husbands, all have faithful proved,
 Whose watchful cares and smiles, and God-like worth,
 Have made your homes the Eden's of the earth,
 Think of the wife desert, the loved one flown,
 And make the ill-starred Lesbian's case your own.

* * * *

If wrong assail you now to Christ ye go;
 Who turns you not away on any grounds,
 But pours the balm of Gilead in your wounds.

CORRESPONDENCE.

FAITH CHILTERN.—With a few alterations the best poem received will be acceptable. We will let you see the proof. Thanks for the "Answer."

A. E. D.—MSS. to hand. Kindly send stamped envelope. We would reply by post.

F. H. P.—"Rosebud" accepted. "The Rose of Sharon" would be good were it in rhyme. The interest of short lined poems of this description depends much upon their music.

"Spring" and "Love," by M. T.—We will insert the first-mentioned as it is pretty and brief. Will contributors, however, kindly take notice that we shall doom to destruction all MSS. headed "Spring," which shall be received in future. Indeed, were we to keep all such we might shortly be able to paper Paternoster-row with them.

W. C. B. (Dublin).—"Reminiscence" accepted. Thanks. "Fieldfares" is good as a whole, but not of sufficient interest, besides the moral is weakly worded.

"Lame in the Legs."—You are right in saying that some poets discard measure. Coleridge said that the music of rhythm depended more upon accent, and what we now call swing, than upon length of feet. This is only true of the irregular metre which Coleridge brought into fashion in *Christabel*, and which Hood often used with wonderful effect. Tastes differ so much that the same post often brings us strong praise and blame of the same lines.

CALAIS.—You can order any of the back numbers through any bookseller, but you had better order the vol. It is a very elegant and cheap book—post free for 4s., if no bookseller near.

"Omega."—Yes. We shall be glad of any poems which strike hard at the wrongs of the age, and also some sharp shooting at the follies of the day—not political nor religious.

"A Plea for the Homeless," by ERINNA (Partridge & Co).—This is a poem well printed in the pamphlet form, and appeals to the wants of all the followers of Christ who, were they to follow their Master in everything, would sympathise not in words only but in deeds. We extract the following verse as specimen of the whole:—

A Home!—no Home have we
Mid Homes—*such* Homes may die;
Sweet Home! oh, mocking song!—*No Home!*
Echoes our weary sigh.

J. B. (Glasgow) is thanked for contributions, which we have placed among accepted matter.

A. E. D. S. (Compton).—We have selected "Canna Forget." Will you send stamp for reply by post.

"Remembrances," by W. H. R.—This young author should avoid repetitions of ideas. For instance he tells us of pleasures *past and o'er*. Surely the words are synonymous. We give our readers the benefit of the last stanza:—

Who would not gladly gaze away
For e'er in days gone past,
And let our sunny thoughts have sway
To cheer us to the last.

G. ASHWORTH.—See answer to A. E. D.

JEROOM.—Thanks. We read your favour through. Unfortunately our memory is not good enough to enable us to say "Yes" or "No." If more than page of print, NO.

T. B. (Brighton).—Capital poetry. See answer to A. E. D. Our correspondence is so voluminous that we really must insist on stamped envelopes being sent.

G. L. F. (San Remo).—Volume and sonnets to hand. We will review the book, and gladly make use of the MSS.

"The Child and the Stars," by E. H. T.—The tone of the poem is too juvenile. We are much obliged by your offer.

E. R. (Devonport).—Very suitable. See answer to A. E. D.

H. K.—You are right in supposing that Robert Browning, the poet, is the husband of the late and deeply to be lamented Elizabeth Barrett Browning. You are occasionally (unconsciously no doubt) guilty of plagiarism. For instance:—

Sigh no more in mournful numbers,
Life is brighter than it seems,—

tallies with some grand lines in Longfellow's "Psalm of Life." Motto accepted, and will appear in due course.

A. F. M. (Croydon).—Good, but rather lengthy for our pages. See answer to A. E. D.

W. CROWLEY.—Poems to hand. We will try and cull some flowers for our friends. We have some copy from Harry M. for future numbers.

BRIGHTON.—Thanks for your kind offer. We shall be much obliged if you will lend the Magazine to the Reading Room—it is a good and cheap way for friends to help; we wish you would order the Volume and leave it in the Hotel for a time. Your verses are not near the mark.

YOUNG MILTON.—We shall not give our time to read and report upon your poems unless you send us stamps, or a subscription according to our rule. We will not work for nothing, nor should you.

BELFAST.—Your bookseller must know that it is untrue to say that he cannot get the Magazine for you. Our Publisher is in the middle of Paternoster Row, besides which all the Wholesale Houses keep it in stock. We have still a few of the back numbers left.

PRIZES.—Highgate.—We intend to repeat our offer of Prizes this year with some alteration.

AJAX.—Wolverhampton.—We hardly know which edition of our Standard Poets is the best for you. Send to Mudie's Library for their printed catalogue and judge.

LL.D.—We have to send so many Magazines by post to our subscribers, that it would be a costly thing to increase the weight—it is just under four ounces now.

In answer to Idele in last month's Magazine, as to whom Mr. Tennyson intended as the first character in his "Dream of Fair Women," most correspondents are certain that the lady is "Helen, the wife of Menelaus,"—this is our decided opinion, and is confirmed by M. E. Carter, Ripon, H. F. Spencer, Oxford.

ACCEPTED WITH THANKS.—"Angel to dying maiden," by C. M. L. "Her Home." "Morn, Noon, and Night." Hope Ever," by E. B. (Dorking).

DECLINED WITH THANKS.—"Melpomene," by L. E.; "Alone," by R. C.; "Far Away," by Lilla C.; "Semiramis;" "So dear my Love," by C. M.; "Minnie," by C. T.; "Sedan;" "Six Sonnets," by A. C.; "Isles of the West," by E. M.; "Left to die," by N. H.; "Beloved," by S. T.; "The Fairies' Tryst;" "The Sea King," by Rebna; "Home."

THE PRIZES FOR 1876.

After careful consideration we conclude that the Prizes fairly fall to the following compositions; and we shall be glad if the Authors will kindly communicate with us.

STORIES IN VERSE.

1. "Athol." 2. "The Marble Statue." 3. "Philip and Mary."

ESSAYS ON POETS OR POETRY.

1. "Robert Buchanan." 2. "Goldsmith."

SONGS OR SONNETS.

1. "Song for Summer." 2. "Orion." 3. "A June Chanson."

BEST BIBLICAL POEM.

"Daniel."

BEST BIBLICAL ESSAY.

"Poetry of the Bible" (Mizpah).

Our Readers will notice that we have increased the number of the Prizes because we found it difficult to decide on their merits. We also feel it to be a duty to state that we have many other capital compositions specially from G. R. Bowman ("Harold,"), Marie Trevelyan ("Essay"), M. E. Carter, Esq. ("Biblical Essay"), Agnes Stonehewer, Rita, C. E. Carter, F. W. Bouchier, H., Miss Tenson, C. Secretan, among sixty contributions.

Only two perfectly puerile productions have reached us; the one a would-be "Song," the other a so-called "Elegy." In writing, punctuation, orthography and style, these stand alone as mournful examples of the poetic genius of the hour. And it is not altogether without compunction that we transfer these documents to the waste paper basket, forbearing to reveal the names of their manufacturers to the world.

We offer all the Prizes again for the present year. Compositions to come in before the birth of 1878.

We wish to give a special prize to the author of "The Shadow of Death." Will the writer kindly let us hear from him.

TO OUR READERS.

While the proprietors will be happy to receive contributions from unknown writers, they are—to prevent the Magazine sinking to the level of an amateur publication—making arrangements with various authors of note, who will, from time to time, furnish poems, and articles on poets and poetry. The main feature of THE POETS' MAGAZINE will be to invite all who possess literary talent to contribute to its pages.

Original contributions only are acceptable.

No Manuscripts can be returned, except by special arrangement.

In all cases where written answers to letters are desired, a directed envelope and two stamps must be enclosed.

As we have received so many letters asking for criticism on enclosures, and have consequently been obliged to engage a co-editor in order to get through the work, we find it necessary to state that any correspondent *who is not a subscriber* to our Magazine, and desires criticism on MSS., either privately or in print, must enclose twelve stamps with each contribution. In all cases where this rule is complied with, a prompt and candid opinion will be given, and a copy of the current number of the Magazine forwarded post free. Should the matter received be first class, we shall, of course, be glad not only to publish but to pay for it.

This rule does not apply to established Authors, whose communications will at all times receive attention.

All who wish the "P. M." sent monthly by post, because they cannot obtain it through a bookseller, can have single copies for seven stamps.

Subscription for Contributors (who will alone be allowed to compete for Prizes)	{	Yearly, 10s. 6d.;	Half-yearly, 6s.
Subscription for Non-Writers		6s.	3s.

Authors and Correspondents are requested to apply by letter only, addressed to the Editor of THE POETS' MAGAZINE, 21, Paternoster Row, London.

Post Office Orders payable at Temple Bar Post Office, to the Editor, Mr. Leonard Lloyd.